THE LAST REFORMATION

F. G. SMITH

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The last reformation

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WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES
THE REVELATION EXPLAINED
EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY
MISSIONARY JOURNEYS THROUGH BIBLE LANDS

The Last Reformation

By F. G. Smith

GOSPEL TRUMPET COMPANY
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PREFACE

God's true people everywhere are looking for light on the church question. A deep undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the present order of things exists in the ecclesiastical world. The historic creeds are stationary and conservative, but religious thought can not always be bound nor its progress permanently hindered. Honest Christian men and women will think, and they are now thinking in the terms of a universal Christianity. If I am able to discern the signs of the times, the rising tide of Christian love and fellowship is about to overflow the lines of sect and bring together in one common hope and in one common brotherhood all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

What will constitute the leading characteristics of the church of the future? This is the burning question. Spiritual-minded men are conscious that things can not long continue as they now are, but what and where is the remedy?

After this book was completed and in the hands of the printers, I received a copy of "The Church and its Organization," by Walter Lowrie, and was surprized to find in it much truth that I had already received through independent investigation and embodied in my manuscript. I refer particularly to the charismatic organization and

government of the church. It is gratifying to know that other minds are being led to the same conclusions regarding a subject of such vital importance to the future of Christianity.

In writing the present work I have endeavored to present the Scriptural solution of this great problem, a solution which takes into account, and gives due respect to, historic Christianity, the prophecies respecting the church and its destiny, and the fundamental characteristics of our holy religion as it emanated from the divine Founder.

If this work can be of service in pointing out Christ's plan and purpose to "gather together in one the children of God which are scattered abroad," and also be instrumental in helping to accomplish this grand Christian ideal, I shall feel abundantly repaid. F. G. Smith.

Anderson, Indiana, May 6, 1919.

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INTRODUCTION

"THE TIME OF REFORMATION"

In ecclesiastical history the term Reformation has been applied specifically to the important religious movement of the sixteenth century which resulted in the formation of the various Protestant churches of that period. Since the sixteenth century there have been other religious reformations, some of considerable importance and influence.

There is a present reformation specially distinguished from all those that have gone before. It is resulting from the particular operation of the Spirit of God as predicted in the Word of God, and its influences are being felt in varying degrees throughout all Christendom. Many Christians are already stirred to action by the conscious knowledge of Christ's message for these times, while multiplied thousands of others who love the Lord Jesus are experiencing within their own hearts the awakening of new aspirations and impulses, the real meaning of which they do not as yet understand, but which are, through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, unconsciously fitting them for their true place in this great world-wide movement which is destined to exceed in importance and influence all

A present reformation

other religious reformations since the days of primitive Christianity.

Since, as we shall show, the present reformation is the work of the Spirit affecting all true Christians, drawing them together for the realization of a grand Scriptural ideal, it is evident that no particular band of people enjoy its exclusive monopoly. May the same Holy Spirit illuminate our hearts and minds in the contemplation of the truths of the divine Word.

The term *reformation* signifies "the act of reforming or the state of being reformed; change from worse to better; correction or amendment of life, manners, or of anything vicious or corrupt." In its application to the religion of Christ, reformation means the correction of abuses and corrupt practises that have become associated with the Christian system; the elimination of all unworthy, foreign elements. In other words, it implies *restoration,* a return to the practises and ideals of primitive Christianity.

What the final reformation must include

If we inquire concerning the limits of true reformatory work, we see at once that, if there is to be a final reformation, such a movement must restore in its fundamental aspects *apostolic Christianity*—its doctrines, its ordinances, its personal regenerating and sanctifying experiences, its spiritual life, its holiness, its power, its purity, its gifts of the Spirit, its unity of believers, and

its fruits. This assumes, of course, that during the centuries there has been a departure from this standard.

The church itself the real object of reformation

No reformation since apostolic times has covered all this ground. All the reformations taken together fall far short of this standard. They have been reformations only in part, each movement simply placing special emphasis on particular doctrines, or ordinances, or personal experiences. Hence the need of further reformation. The present movement embraces all the truth contained in all the previous reformations of Protestantism. But it does not stop there. It stands committed to all the truth of the Word of God. It goes straight to the heart of the reformation subject and reveals the pure, holy, *universal* church of the apostolic times as made up of all those who were regenerated, uniting them all IN CHRIST; in the "church of the living God," which church was "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15); the church that was graced with the gifts of the Spirit and filled with holy power.

The true apostolic church has been largely lost to view since the early Christian centuries, when a general apostasy dimmed the light of truth and plunged the world into the darkness of papal night. In modern times the term "church" as applied to a general body of religious worshipers is usually employed in a restricted sense, specifying some

particular organization, as the hierarchy of Rome or the aggregation of local congregations constituting a Protestant sect. By a natural reaction from the Romish extreme, wherein the church and church relationship are exalted above the personal relationship of the individual with his God, many teachers now incline to an opposite extreme, which makes little of the church as an institution, substituting therefor a sort of "loyalty to Christ," *individualism,* subversive of true New Testament standards.

The true church Scripturally important

The church is not to be exalted above the Christ, nor is it a substitute for the Christ; but in the light of New Testament teaching we must regard the true church as *the* instrument—the divinely appointed instrument used by the Holy Spirit in carrying forward the work of Christ on earth. Jesus himself said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). At a later time we read, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

If Paul were living today, he also might despise the "church" idea in its narrow sectarian sense. But from the apostle's words, it is very evident that he regarded the church as it existed in his day as an institution crowned with glory and honor, the concrete expression of Christ and his truth. "*God hath set some* IN THE CHURCH,

first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:28). "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the *edifying of the body of Christ;* till we all come in the unity of the faith . . . that we . . . may *grow up into him in all things,* which is the head, [of the body, *the church,* Col. 1:18] even Christ" (Eph. 4:11-15).

The church as a divine institution

Inasmuch as God set in the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, gifts of miracles, of healings, etc., we must regard the church as originally instituted as being more than a mere aggregate of individuals associating themselves together for particular purposes. We must recognize the divine element. This company was the host of redeemed ones whom Christ had saved, in whom he dwelt, and through whom he revealed God and accomplished his work on earth. It was his body—the organism to which he gave spiritual life and through which he manifested the fulness of his power and glory.

Any reformation that has not for its object the full restoration of the New Testament church, can not be a complete reformation, but must be succeeded by another. In this respect the church subject is fundamental and all-inclusive. To em-

phasize a mere "personal-union-with-Christ" theory to the disparagement of the divine *ekklesia,* is to evade the real issue. Jesus declared, "I will build my church," and that church was an objective reality, which was not intended to be concealed under high-sounding theological verbiage nor dissipated in glittering generalities. It is true that Christ himself must be presented as the ground of our hope and salvation and as the object of our personal faith, love, and devotion; as "the way, the truth, and the life"; but we must not forget that there is also a revelation of the way, the truth, and the life in the church of Christ. The apostles preached Christ as the divine "way"; but when men believed on him, he straightway "set the members every one of them *in the body*"—the church (1 Cor. 12:18). "And the Lord added *to the church* daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). They preached Christ as the personification of "truth." But they also taught that the gospel was a special "treasure" committed to the church for dispensing to the nations. Paul said that God hath "committed *unto us* the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19). Therefore he could represent the church of God "as the pillar and ground of the truth." They preached him as "life," but he was also the life of the collective body of believers as well as of individuals. He dwelt in his church. He was its life, and through

Church relationship vs. individualism

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it he manifested himself in the only form in which, since the incarnation, he can be fully exhibited to men.

Avoiding extremes

The fact that Romanism has stressed the "church" idea, parading before the world as the church an organic body devoid of true spiritual life, a mere corpse, is no reason justifying a view which, ignoring the practical church relationship taught in the New Testament, talks glibly of an ethereal, intangible, ghostly something which, without a body, lacks all practical contact with men. The Bible standard is the proper union of soul and body. It is certain that, as in apostolic days, such union is necessary to the proper exhibition of the divine life and absolutely essential to the full accomplishment of the divine purposes in Christ's great redemptive plan.

Christ, the life of his spiritual body, and the life-giver, remains the same in all ages. Hence the church *body* is the part that has been disrupted and corrupted by apostasy and sectarianism, and is therefore the sphere of reformatory effort. And while reformation pertains to historical Christianity, it implies, as we have already shown, a return to the primitive standard. Therefore, before proceeding to describe particularly the present reformation, we must give attention to the constitution of the apostolic church, the divine original.

PART I
The Church in Apostolic Days

The Last Reformation

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH DEFINED

The word "church" as used in the New Testament is, in most cases, derived from the Greek word *ekklesia*. The component parts of this word literally mean to summon or call together in public convocation. It was, therefore, used to designate any popular assembly which met for the transaction of public business. As an example of the secular use of the term, see Acts 19:32, 39. This particular application of the word, however, does not here concern us.

The term "church"

Since the word *ekklesia* conveys the idea of an assembly of *"called ones,"* it expresses beautifully the Christian's call to churchly association. The divine call of believers is frequently expressed in the New Testament: they are "called with an holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9); "called in one body" (Col. 3:15); "called unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12); or, as Peter expresses it, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). While these texts and many others describe

the exalted rights and privileges accorded the "called ones," there is distinctly implied the idea of their organic association, and it was this association that constituted them the Christian church.

"The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28), is clearly set forth in the New Testament. And the term "church" in its religious usage is given two significations. In its largest and primary signification, the church of God is the entire body of regenerated persons in all times and places, and is in this respect identical with the spiritual kingdom of God, the divine family. In a secondary sense, church designates an individual assembly in which the universal church takes local and temporary form and in which the idea of the general church is concretely exhibited.

Its two Christian phases

Besides these two significations of the Christian term "church," there are, properly speaking, no other in the New Testament. It is true that *ekklesia* is sometimes used as a collective term to denote the body of local churches existing in a given region, but there is no evidence that these churches were bound together in groups by any outward organization which separated or distinguished them from other congregations of the general church. Therefore this use of the term "church" can not be regarded as adding any new sense to those of the general church and the local church already referred to.

CHAPTER II

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

Matt. 16:18 introduces in the gospel history the subject of the church. Jesus said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This text implies that the church as an institution was not yet founded, and it also clearly implies that Christ himself was to be the founder and builder of his church.

Jesus had already preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and when he sent forth his twelve apostles he commanded them to preach and say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus himself taught the doctrines of the kingdom, but in the words of our text there is implied deeper ideas of the kingdom of God yet to be revealed in all their fulness of meaning.

We should divest our minds, temporarily at least, of preconceived ideas of formal church organization and earnestly seek to understand the real signification of that church of which Christ was himself personally the founder. A few texts make this point clear: "And hath put all things under his [Christ's] feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church, *which is his body*, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23). The church, then, is the body of Christ. Of this

The body of Christ

body Jesus himself is the head. "And he is the head of the body, the church . . . that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). "For his body's sake, which is the church" (verse 24). Christ is head of but one body. "There is *one* body" (Eph. 4:4). In these texts the body and the church are used interchangeably, referring to one and the same thing. The body of which Christ is the head is the church that he built, "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

The atonement its procuring cause

It is therefore to Calvary that we must look for the specific act by virtue of which Christ personally became the founder of his church. *There* it was "purchased with his own blood." *There* we find the application of those sublime words of the Savior, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, *will draw all men* UNTO ME" (John 12:32). By virtue of that act, God "put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." Yea, by virtue of that act, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and that every tongue should confess" (Phil. 2:9-11).

The church, then, proceeds from Calvary: Pentecost was but its initial manifestation to men and its dedication for service. Of this we shall have more to say hereafter.

Since through his death Christ proposed to draw all men unto him, it is evident that all the members of Christ are therefore members of his body, the church. To this agrees the words of the apostle Paul, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we [true Christians], being many, are *one body in Christ,* and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:4, 5). "Now hath God set the members *every one of them* in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 12:18).

Composed of true Christians

Becoming a member of the spiritual body of Christ is necessarily a spiritual operation. Men may admit members to a formal church relationship, but only the Spirit of God can make us members of Christ. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized [or inducted] into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). This text does not refer to literal water-baptism, but to the work of the "Spirit," by whom we are inducted into Christ. *"God hath set the members* every one of them in the body" (verse 18). And since this is the work of the Spirit, it is evident that none but the saved can possibly find admittance into the spiritual body of Christ. Under a different figure Jesus conveys the same truth. "I am the door: by me if *any man* enter in,

Mode of admission

he shall be saved'' (John 10:9). ''And the Lord added to them day by day those that *were being saved''* (Acts 2:47, R. V.). Salvation, then, is the condition of membership.

The members of Christ are members of God's family. How do we become members of the divine family? ''Except a man *be born again,* he can not see the kingdom of God'' (John 3:3). ''As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God . . . which were *born . . . of God''* (John 1:12, 13). ''Beloved, now are we the sons of God'' (1 John 3:2). Since this family, or church, is composed of the saved, or those who are born again, and excludes all the unsaved, we can understand Paul's reference to ''a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,'' but *''holy and without blemish''* (Eph. 5:27).

Family relationship

We have spoken of the union of all believers with Christ when he draws them unto himself and becomes their spiritual life. But this unity of all believers *with Christ* is a spiritual relationship and experience not to be confused with external things. The Bible speaks of Christians as being ''in Christ.'' What does this mean? It certainly means to be ''born again,'' for without that experience we ''can not see the kingdom of God'' (John 3:3). ''Therefore if any man be *in Christ,* HE IS A NEW CREATURE: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new''

(2 Cor. 5:17). "Whosoever abideth *in him* sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him" (1 John 3:6).

Unity of believers

But our union with Christ, by which we become members of the divine family, necessarily fixes our relationship with all those who are members of Christ. If, through salvation, we are brought into a sacred unity with Christ, we are by the same act brought into essential unity and fellowship with the members of Christ. This the Word distinctly affirms: "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and *every one members one of another*" (Rom. 12:4, 5). "There should be no schism in the body; but the members should have the same care one for another" (1 Cor. 12:25). While this last text relates literally to the physical body, the apostle applies it in an illustrative way to the spiritual body. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (verse 27).

Unity and uniformity

Harmony in a normal physical body is not effected by external means, but is organic. The members may be many and diverse, but they are all necessary and have their respective places and work. So also with the body of Christ. Union with Christ is not dependent upon absolute uniformity except in the one thing—the fundamental experience by which we are made members of Christ. In the apostolic period the children of God who loved

our Lord and were known of him were not all of one age or size or nationality. They had not all enjoyed the same social advantages, nor had they had the same intellectual attainments. The act of receiving Christ and his salvation did not perfect their knowledge; therefore they had to be patiently taught in order to bring them into the "unity of the faith." And for this purpose divinely chosen instructors were appointed, who must themselves "study" and give careful attention to "doctrine" (Eph. 4:11-14; 1 Tim. 3:13-16). But the gospel penetrates beneath the surface; it goes straight to the heart and reaches fundamental things. "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: *for ye are all one* IN CHRIST JESUS" (Gal. 3:28).

The unity of believers with Christ is, therefore, based on divine relationship, and *this is the fundamental basis of the true relationship of believers with each other.* In order to maintain spiritual relationship with Christ and his people, the Christian must have an obedient heart and "walk in the light of the Lord"; but we should always be ready to extend our fellowship to those whom Christ really receives and approves.

How prone men have ever been to ignore this simple, divine standard and set up arbitrary rules of their own by which to measure others! This wrong tendency combined with the carnal ambi-

tions of men who love to parade their own unscriptural ideas before the world and gain adherents has been the real cause of the disunion of Christians. But the Bible standard is what we are now considering. It teaches that the saved people were "members one of another" as well as members of Christ; that they were, in fact, "*all one in Christ Jesus.*"

Unity a practical reality

According to the New Testament standard, unity of believers is more than an invisible, intangible, spiritual fellowship. They are "members one of another" as well as members of Christ. That unity was designed to be visible and to form a convincing sign to the world of the mighty power of Christ. This stands out prominently in that notable prayer of our Lord recorded in John 17, which was uttered on the most solemn night of his earthly life. First he prayed for his immediate disciples, then for all believers, in these words: "Neither pray I for these [twelve] alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE *that thou hast sent me*" (verses 20, 21).

Such unity is a real standard. It will convince the world. The practical force of this last scripture can not be lessened by reference to those other words of Jesus, "By this shall all men know that

ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another" (John 13:35), for Jesus taught the inseparable nature of love and unity. Love, as an inward affection, produces deeds and results, and is measured thereby. Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will *keep my words;* and my Father will love him, and we will *come unto him,* and *make our abode with him"* (John 14:23). And just as love to God invariably produces union with God, so also true love to man will result in unity. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but *in deed and in truth"* (1 John 3:18). Carnal divisions can not exist where true love reigns.

Christ died for unity

For this visible unity Christ prayed—"That they all may be one, . . . *that the world may believe."* More than this, he died that unity might be effected. John 11:52 clearly shows that one purpose of Christ's death was that "he should gather together *in one* the children of God that were scattered abroad." Therefore unity of believers is a sacred truth resting on the solid basis of the atonement. That this unity is more than that general union resulting from the personal attachment of separate individuals to Christ as a common center, is proved by the fact that it is designed to gather together in one the scattered *children of God.* Jesus himself said, "Other sheep I have [Gentiles], which are not of this [Jewish] fold: *them also I must bring,* and

they shall hear my voice; and THERE SHALL BE ONE FOLD [flock] AND ONE SHEPHERD" (John 10:16).

Jew and Gentile united

Broadly speaking, there were at that time but two classified divisions of men—Jews and Gentiles. Jesus predicted that his sheep from both sections should be brought together into one flock. In the second chapter of Ephesians, Paul tells us how this was accomplished. Although "in times past" the Gentiles were "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world," in Christ they were "made nigh by the blood." "For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jews and Gentiles] ONE, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us . . . that he might reconcile both unto God *in one body* by the cross" (verses 12-16). Since this glorious reunion through Christ, the Gentiles "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." They also "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone . . . in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (verses 19-22).

On account of the high standard of unity set forth in his epistles, Paul has been branded an idealist. But what shall we say of Christ who prayed for such visible unity and died for it? An

idealist is one who forms picturesque fancies, one given to romantic expectations impossible of accomplishment. The idealist usually has but few practical results. But Paul accomplished things. He broke away from his Jewish prejudices, which brought down upon his head the wrath of his fellows. He went into the synagogs of the Jews and brought out those who were willing to become disciples of Jesus. To build up the work of the Lord he labored night and day with tears; he laid broad and deep the very foundations of the Christian faith in heathen lands. Within a very few years he established Christian churches in four provinces of the Roman Empire—churches in which Jew and Gentile met together in common fellowship, *in one body*. If this is idealism, Lord, give us many more such idealists.

The burden of Paul's ministry

But the unity described by Paul in the epistles which he wrote late in life is not given as a mere ideal standard for the future toward which men should strive. It is given as the record of a historic fact, the accomplishment of which lay at the very foundation of Paul's call to the ministry.

In the second chapter of Ephesians, already quoted, Paul declares that both Jews and Gentiles were reconciled to God in one body *by the cross*. In the next chapter he shows his part in the accomplishment of that end. First, he was called of God as the apostle of the Gentiles; then

by revelation was made known unto him "the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men . . . that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and OF THE SAME BODY, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:4-6). The promise referred to was doubtless the "promise of the Father," the gift of the Holy Ghost. "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the *promise of the Spirit through faith*" (Gal. 3:14). "For this cause," says Paul, "I was made a minister . . . that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and *to make all men see* what is the fellowship of the mystery . . . to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known BY THE CHURCH the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:1-10).

Was divinely attested

Paul was given a tremendous task—"TO MAKE ALL MEN SEE" that mystery. This task required from God "the effectual working of his power" (verse 7). And in another place he also shows that this power was not lacking: "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God" (Rom. 15:18, 19).

Paul, then, was divinely commissioned "*to make all men see*" the mystery of this union of all classes of men "*in one body* by the cross" (Eph. 2:16), all in "the SAME body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:6). And when Paul's career was finished, the same mystery was given over to others that it might be "known BY THE CHURCH" (verse 10), "the church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:22, 23). The ministry, then, should have held the ground already attained, the actual union of all the saved in one body, and have labored earnestly "to make all men see" that that body only is the church.

CHAPTER III

THE LOCAL CHURCH

The words of Christ, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18), convey a deeper meaning than the simple preaching of the kingdom. As we have already shown, the one specific personal act by virtue of which Christ became the founder of the church was his atonement on Calvary, where the church was "purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). The church, then, as an institution, resulted from the atonement. Paul, describing the union of Jews and Gentiles in one body, the church, declares that it was effected "by the cross" (Eph. 2:16).

There was power in redemption. It brought into the lives of believers forces that could not but unite them in social compact. It threw them together in living sympathy and united their hearts firmly in the strong bonds of brotherly love. Their outward organic union as a church was the natural and inevitable result of this inward life and love.

By the impartation of spiritual life to believers and by the agency of the Holy Spirit operating in the apostles as special agents appointed to do his work, Christ built his church on earth. There was a building of the church, then, which pertained specifically to its *local* and *visible* development

among men. The expression "*I* will build" indicates the transcendent element, the divine element, in church organization. This being true, it follows that the local church was not merely an aggregate of individuals accidently gathered together, but was the local, concrete embodiment of the spiritual body of Christ; the unified company of regenerated persons who, as a body, were dedicated to Christ, acknowledged of Christ, and used by Christ through the Holy Spirit for the accomplishment of his work. Jerusalem furnishes the first example, dating from Pentecost (Acts 2).

Local church defined

That this is, generally speaking, the Scriptural definition of a local church of God, is further shown by another particular example. Paul addressed two of his epistles "to the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1). As individuals they are called "saints" and "brethren," but collectively as a church they are called "the church of God" and referred to as "God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9). And the apostle says to them, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the *Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*" (verse 16, R. V.). They had been inducted by the Spirit into the "*one body,*" and they were filled with the gifts of the Spirit—wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, and tongues (chap. 12). In fact, the apostle said, "Ye

Particular example: Corinth

come behind in no gift" (chap. 1:7). And he said particularly, *"Ye are the body of Christ"* (chap. 12:27).

A true local church, then, was the concrete embodiment of the spiritual body of Christ in a given place. It was the body of Christ because it was made up of the people of God, manifested the power of God, was the repository of the truth of God, was filled with the gifts of the Spirit of God, and was actually used by the Spirit in performing the works of God. Such characteristics made it *"the church of God."*

Membership in the general body of Christ was conditioned solely on the new birth, or salvation.

Local membership

Since the individual church was the local embodiment of the general church, none but the saved could properly become members thereof, and all who were truly saved (in the same locality) belonged to it by divine right. At this point, however, the human element in the constitution of the local church became manifest. We have pointed out the divine element in the true church—the element that particularly distinguished it as the church of God, but the bringing together of many individuals in one assembly involved also a social element and required the principle of *recognition.* There is, however, no evidence that such recognition was given by a formal, official act of the church in its corporate capacity. And since salvation is of the

heart, it was possible for human recognition to temporarily miss its true purpose. Thus, in the church at Jerusalem we find recognized as a constituent part of the assembly two false members—Ananias and Sapphira. On the other hand, when the converted Saul "was come to Jerusalem, he essayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26). The church at Corinth, already referred to, had some false members at the time the Pauline epistles were written. The church at Samaria also tolerated for a time one whose "heart was not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8).

A holy church

Since the local church was designed to exhibit concretely the spiritual body of Christ, none but saved persons could *properly* hold membership therein; therefore the local church when in its normal condition was free from sin and sinners. The physical body, which Paul uses to illustrate the spiritual body, is normal only when every member possesses the life of the body and functions properly. So also was the body of Christ. It was not God's will that there should be (as recognized members) "sinners in the congregation of the righteous" (Psa. 1:5). It was his will to purge Jerusalem "by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning" until "*he that is left* in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called *holy,* even *every one*

that is written among the living in Jerusalem'' (Isa. 4:3, 4).

Discernment and judgment necessary

The local congregation in Jerusalem did not cease to be the church of God because two unworthy persons obtained recognition in it. This incident gave occasion for the church to manifest its inherent *life* by its ability to discern and then cast off the secret offenders just as a healthy physical body casts off effete matter. As a result of the judgment pronounced on Ananias and Sapphira, ''great fear came upon all the church . . . and of the rest *durst no man join himself to them;* but the people magnified them'' (Acts 5:11, 13). The fiery judgments of God put an end to formal church-joining there, as a result of which ''believers were the more *added to the Lord,* multitudes both of men and women'' (verse 14). ''And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved'' (Acts 2:47, R. V.).

A clean, pure local church was the divine standard. It is evident that such could never be obtained and maintained except by the power of the Holy Spirit, who discerned evil and prompted its elimination. Peter discerned the condition of the two false members in the church at Jerusalem and removed that blemish. He also exposed the hypocrisy of Simon at Samaria, and Paul pointed out the evil affection in the church at Corinth and directed its removal. Chief responsibility for the

maintenance of the normal condition of the church will be considered in our discussion of the particular features of church organization and government.

Apostasy possible

We have shown the characteristic, spiritual features of a New Testament congregation in its normal condition; also the possibility of deviation from that standard. A practical question is, How far could such a congregation lapse into an abnormal state and still be a church of God? Or, Can a church as a body backslide? The church at Ephesus evidently was on the verge of such an apostasy. Therefore in the special message addressed to it in Revelation the Lord said: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and *will remove thy candlestick* out of his place" (Rev. 2:4, 5). So also the church at Laodicea. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art luke warm, and neither cold nor hot, *I will spew thee out of my mouth*" (Rev. 3:15, 16).

The physical body may experience the mutilation of some of its members and still survive, but there is a limit beyond which death will ensue. So also the spiritual body may survive the encumbrance of a few false members. From the general

facts and principles already adduced, however, we may safely assert that a local church is a church of God only so long as it is able to function properly *as a body.* As long as the Spirit of God is in the ascendency, so that the people of God as a body manifest the power of God, maintain the truth of God, are filled with the Spirit of God, and are actually used by the Spirit in performing the works of God, so long they are the church of God. Whenever another spirit gains the ascendency and the divine, spiritual characteristics are lost to view, then is brought to pass the saying that is written, *"I will spew thee out of my mouth."* Beyond that time they may continue their formal services, singing hymns, saying prayers, and making speeches; but the real message of God describing their condition is, as was true of Sardis, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, *and art dead"* (Rev. 3:1). Such dead congregations are no longer a part of the true church and are unworthy of the recognition of spiritual congregations.

The line of distinction

CHAPTER IV

THE ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

The fact of organization

We have already shown that the words of Christ "I will build my church" have a deeper meaning than the simple preaching of the kingdom. They imply the formation of an organized structure against which even the gates of hell should not prevail. They can signify nothing less than the visible establishment of the church among men as the concrete embodiment of the divine kingdom or family. The church, then, as made up of local congregations, is an institution of divine appointment. This is shown by the words of Christ in Matt. 18:17, according to which it sometimes becomes necessary in admonishing and disciplining trespassers to *"tell it unto the church";* and the appellation "church of *God"* is frequently applied to individual congregations (1 Cor. 1:2, et al.).

Many teachers hold that Christ did not build a church and that the "form of church organization is not definitely prescribed in the New Testament, but is a matter of expediency, every body of believers being permitted to adopt that method of organization which best suits its circumstances and condition." Such is the Protestant view put forth by those who seek an excuse for the modern

system of sect-building. The incorrectness of this theory is easily shown. First, as we shall see, it underestimates the need of divine direction in church relationship and ignores well-established facts in the New Testament history. Secondly, if it proves anything, it proves too much; for to admit such a principle of "church powers" is to admit that the papacy and every other human system of church control is justified—systems which can be historically shown to be subversive of the church as a spiritual body.

That the church was actually organized into local assemblies in apostolic days is abundantly shown by the New Testament record. They had regular meetings at stated times (Heb. 10:25; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:12); officers (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2; Eph. 4:11, 12); recognized authority (1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17); discipline (1 Cor. 5:13; 2 Thess. 3:6, 10-14); a system of contributions (1 Cor. 16:1, 2); ordinances (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-29); a common work, etc. On one occasion Paul instructed Titus to "*set in order* the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city" (Tit. 1:5).

The words of Jesus "I will build my church" point us to the Christ as its real founder. Since the life and genius of the church is the superhuman element, which element must at all times be given precedence over mere outward forms and human characteristics, and since this life proceeds

from Christ as the Redeemer of men, therefore in all fundamental aspects he is the personal founder of the church. But more than this, working by proxy, Jesus gave even external form to his church, employing for this purpose his chosen apostles, to whom he gave special instruction and authority. Even during his personal ministry Jesus performed some of his work by proxy. It is expressly stated that he baptized many (John 3:22; 4:1), and yet explanation is made that "Jesus himself baptized not, *but his disciples*" (John 4:2).

By whom effected

So also in the organization of the church. The germ of that organization existed during Christ's personal ministry. Doctrine was given, ministers preached, baptism was administered, and people believed, but this embryonic organization could not be completely established as a church before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Therefore provision was made for its progressive development under the tutelage of specially inspired apostles. Doctrine was given gradually, yet invariably through the oral and written teaching of these inspired apostles. Therefore we can not but believe that the same invariable guidance of the Holy Spirit also perfected through them God's own plan of church organization and work. The gradual development of church organization under the labors of the apostles, therefore, no more proves the theory of a constant historic development than

does the fact of a gradual unfolding of the Christian faith and doctrine by the apostles prove a constant and unending revelation of the gospel through all succeeding ages. One writer has well said, "The same promise of the Spirit which renders the New Testament an unerring and sufficient rule of faith renders it also an unerring and sufficient *rule of practise* for the church in all places and times." We must therefore regard the organization of the church, as we do the unfolding of the gospel message, as complete in all its fundamental and essential aspects before the close of the sacred canon.

Apostolic agency

There is no doubt that the apostles occupied a special place in the divine establishment of the church and its message. Regarded as a temple, the church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone" (Eph. 2:20). The Old Testament Scripture "came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). But now we read, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days *spoken unto us* BY HIS SON" (Heb. 1:1, 2). Moses, representative of the law, and Elias, representative of the prophets, appeared in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration; but when Peter suggested that they be ac-

corded equal honors with Jesus, immediately a cloud overshadowed the company and a voice out of the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; HEAR YE HIM." "And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save *Jesus only*" (Matt. 17:1-8).

Model for all ages

The revelation of divine truth, therefore, as the foundation of our faith, reached its highest level in the Son. We need not look for another gospel—*hear him.* He has also said, "I will build my church"; hence we need not look for another church—HEAR HIM! Paul declares that the gospel with its revelation of the "mystery" of the union of the saved in one body, the church, was in his day *"made manifest,"* and, "according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations *for the obedience of faith"* (Rom. 16:25, 26). See Eph. 2; 3:1-10. While therefore Christ was the author of the truth in its highest form of revelation, also the founder of his church, both reached their fulness of perfection under the inspired apostles and was by them "made known to all nations *for the obedience of faith."* The unity of all believers for which Christ solemnly prayed was to be accomplished through the direct agency of the apostles, the result of believing on Christ *"through* THEIR *Word"* (John 17:20).

In describing how both Jews and Gentiles were reconciled in one body by the cross, Paul says that

God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: *that in the ages to come* he might show the exceeding riches of his grace" (Eph. 2:6, 7). The unified church of the apostolic day is therefore the divine model for all succeeding ages.

Paul's relation thereto

Since the first apostles were employed as special agents in establishing the perfected New Testament church, Paul's connection therewith is of particular importance. Paul was not one of the original twelve, yet he exerted a tremendous influence in that period and was undoubtedly one of the chief agents used in establishing the church and fixing its external form and character.

Many believe that Paul belonged among the twelve as the real successor of Judas. According to this view, the election of Matthias to the apostleship was without divine sanction, being proposed by the impetuous Peter, who, before the descent of the Holy Ghost, often proposed inadvised things. Strength is given this view by the oft-repeated assertion of Paul that he was an apostle, "not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:1). We are not forced to that conclusion concerning Matthias, however. In writing the Acts of the Apostles, Luke, the companion of Paul, records the appointment of Matthias without intimating that it was a mistake. In Scripture usage a certain parallelism is main-

tained between the twelve apostles of the Lamb and the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. When we recall that there were literally thirteen tribes in Israel, Ephriam and Manasseh standing for Joseph, we need not be surprized that there should be literally thirteen foundational apostles in the Christian church, Matthias and Paul standing, as it were, in the place of Judas.

There can be no doubt that Paul really ranked with the Twelve. He was a "chosen vessel," the "apostle of the Gentiles." Although as one "born out of due time," he himself saw Jesus and from him received the entire gospel by direct revelation. Consequently the other apostles possessed no advantage over him. He himself says, "The gospel which was preached of me was not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11, 12). He "was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5). And it was through Paul particularly that the revelation of the "mystery" was made complete—"that both Jews and Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of *the* SAME *body,*" and he was commissioned *"to make all men see"* it.

The general church was, therefore, made up of various local congregations, which were "set in order" by apostolic authority. The essential nature of this organization is determined by the object for which these congregations were formed,

the conditions of membership therein, and the kind of laws by which they were governed.

Nature of its organization

The primary object for which the local church was formed was the establishment and extension of the kingdom of God among men. A secondary object was the encouragement and mutual edification of the believers themselves, which was best obtained by united worship in prayer, exhortation, praise, thanksgiving, and religious instruction.

We have already noted the conditions of membership in the local church. None but those who were already members of the body of Christ could properly be recognized as members in a congregation which was designed by Christ to exhibit in local and temporary form the true idea of the church universal. According to this standard of membership, every individual owed allegiance directly to Christ himself as the great head of the church. Christ was the only lawgiver. The relation of the individual to the local church, then, did not in any sense supersede his personal relations to Christ, but simply strengthened and further expressed this higher relationship.

In this standard of church-membership is found the secret of the union in one body of all apostolic Christians. The standard was *personal relationship to Christ,* and this relationship could be obtained only by an experience of salvation and humble obedience to the law of Christ. Therefore all

the truly saved were members of Christ and members of each other. This standard being the same for all, it led to absolute equality among members. Hence Paul could say, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one *in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:28).

The law of the church, as already stated, was simply "the law of Christ"; first as delivered orally by specially inspired apostles, and afterwards expressed by them in the Christian Scriptures.

Organization and government

The closest relationship necessarily existed between the organization of the church and its method of government. It is impossible for us to get a clear conception of either independently of the other; and in order to understand the subject at all, we must bear in mind the fundamental nature of the church itself, what it was and what it was designed to accomplish. The church was not, as we have seen, a mere aggregate of individuals that happened to gather or that assembled for ordinary purposes. A social club or a business organization would have possessed all those features. The church was the body of Christ, the body to which he gave spiritual life and through which he designed to manifest his power and glory. Hence its visible organization was secondary, merely incidental as the means for the accomplishment of those higher ends involved in the transcendental element of the

church. The relation of the divine and the human characteristics was, therefore, the relation of *soul and body*—Christ, the soul; redeemed humanity, the body. The establishment of this relationship was the manifestation to the world of the "body of Christ." It was organization of the church.

From the foregoing considerations, we are certain that in the apostolic church the real emphasis was placed on *life* and that the governmental power and authority of the church was derived from its divine life in Christ and not from its organization. Apostolic church government was, therefore, more than the adoption of some particular form of external organization and administration.

Divine administration

The origin of the church was divine. Jesus said, "I will build my church." And though, as we have seen, he employed human agents in its completion, these agents were so specially inspired and directed by Christ through the Holy Spirit that it was in reality *his* work. Jesus was not only the initial founder of the church, but he was its permanent head and governor. Isaiah, predicting the coming of Christ, declares that "the government *shall be upon* HIS *shoulder*" (Isa. 9:6). And again, we read that "HE *is the head of the body, the church . . . that in all things he might have the preeminence*" (Col. 1:18). He it was who called and commissioned Paul and then personally directed his ministerial

labors (Acts 26:13-19; 16:6-9). He it was who walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, encouraging or reproving the congregations of Asia (Rev. 1:17, et seq.). He is "alive forever more" (Rev. 1:18); "the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8); "upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1:3). "To him be glory *in the church* . . . throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:21).

Christ the living head

Thus, the general nature of church government was an absolute monarchy, or, to use a better term, a theocracy. Christ was king and lawgiver, governor and administrator. Whoever the instruments employed in carrying out his purposes, whatever the scope of their particular activities, all were governed directly by Christ through the Holy Spirit. It was *his* church. He was its living head. No other church was known in those days. It was only when the living, vital union of Christ with his church was lost to view that men began endeavoring to strengthen the bonds of external union by unscriptural human organization, just as when life is departed from the physical body we seek by an embalming process to prevent its speedy dissolution.

In order to understand church government, therefore, we must begin at the central source of authority and proceed to its varied manifesta-

tions. We have seen that Christ employed human agents in accomplishing his work; hence, in thus performing the work of Christ as commanded by Christ, and as personally directed by the Spirit of Christ, these men possessed the *authority of Christ.* Any church governmental authority that does not proceed directly from Christ through his Holy Spirit is but human authority, an usurped authority, and has no place in the real church of Christ.

Delegated authority

The apostles were the first to whom Christ delegated authority. They became his special representatives. They established the church and became responsible for its general direction and oversight, "the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20). But these twelve did not stand alone in the government of the church. Soon a host of ministers were raised up, and these also possessed divine authority for their representative lines of work. To the elders of Ephesus, Paul said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which *the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,* to feed the church of God" (Acts 20:28). Peter also writes: "The elders which are among you I exhort . . . feed the flock of God which is among you, *taking the oversight thereof"* (1 Pet. 5:1, 2). "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I have called them* . . .

Ministerial oversight

so they, *being sent forth by the Holy Ghost,* departed'' (Acts 13:2-4). ''AND HE GAVE some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ'' (Eph. 4:11, 12). In accordance with this standard, we read, ''Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, *as they that must give account''* to him who is ''that great shepherd of the sheep'' (Heb. 13:17, 20). The ministers were under-shepherds appointed to feed the flock of God, for which service they had to give account to the great Shepherd.

The foregoing scriptures and many others show conclusively that, while in the apostolic church spiritual oversight was, in general, vested in the ministry, it did not originate with them; that it did not proceed from the general body of believers by a majority vote or by conference appointment; but that it came by the Holy Spirit direct from the great head of the church, who alone determined the general bounds of that authority and responsibility. This ministry, or presbytery, consisted of two classes—local ministers and general ministers. Before proceeding from this general classification to a discussion of the more specific duties and responsibilities of the individual ministers comprising this presbytery, I shall call at-

tention briefly to the geographical distribution of their work as a body.

Local and general phase

We have already shown that the church in its visible phase was made up of various local congregations "set in order" by apostolic authority. So far as their own local affairs were concerned, these congregations were autonomous. When a matter was purely local, such as the financial oversight and ministration in the church at Jerusalem, the local congregation itself determined the course of action and (excepting that class of officials who were divinely chosen) who should be appointed to oversee it. In the Jerusalem example cited, the apostles suggested, "*Look ye out among you* seven men," etc., "and the saying pleased the whole multitude: *and they chose*" the proper persons for that work (Acts 6:1-5).

But while these congregations possessed such autonomy and were distributed over a wide territory, they were not in all respects independent, isolated units. As members of Christ sharing in a common life and engaged in a common cause, they were bound together in one brotherhood by ties of fellowship and love. In addition to the union of separate individuals in one locality under the care of the local presbytery, the local congregations themselves were brought into close, sympathetic relationship with one another through the labors and influence of those general ministers who

were not attached to particular churches, but whose gifts, callings, and qualifications fitted them for general service throughout the various congregations. The responsibility and authority of these general ministers varied in accordance with their own gifts and qualifications and the degree of development attained by the churches among which they labored. In the case of infant churches, it is evident that oversight was of the apostolic kind—direct and immediate. But whenever they became thoroughly established, the principle of local autonomy was recognized and the relation of the general ministers to such congregations was evangelistic rather than apostolic—helpers and advisors, not administrative directors.

Geographical distribution

That the foregoing analysis is correct is abundantly proved by the history of events in the Acts respecting the geographical distribution of the churches and their relation to one another. Jerusalem was the original seat of Christianity. Isaiah prophesied, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3). Jesus told the apostles "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). And again, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Philip went from Jerusalem to Samaria

and there preached Christ with great success. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, *they sent unto them Peter and John*" (Acts 8:14). Later we read that when churches had been established throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, "it came to pass, *as Peter passed throughout all quarters,* he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda" (Acts 9:31, 32). It was while he was on this general tour visiting the churches that he came to Joppa and there received the vision which led him to the household of Cornelius, after which he came to Jerusalem and was there called to account for his action in visiting the uncircumcised Gentiles.

There is no doubt that there was exerted from Jerusalem a general care over the surrounding churches. Some of the disciples who were scattered from Jerusalem at the time of persecution, went as far as Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word, and many believed and turned to the Lord. "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: *and they sent forth Barnabas* that he should go as far as Antioch" (Acts 11:19-22). Barnabas went to Antioch and there found such a splendid work that he departed at once for Tarsus seeking Saul, and together they returned to Antioch and preached for a whole year.

While this principle of general superintendence

of infant churches originated with the apostles themselves, it was extended to others who were not of the first apostles. Barnabas and Saul were successful at Antioch and there established the first Christian community outside the confines of Judaism, as the result of which Antioch became the seat of Gentile Christianity. Shortly afterwards "certain prophets and teachers" in the church at Antioch, men who were not of the original apostles, were directed by the Holy Ghost to send forth Barnabas and Saul on their first missionary journey, and they went forth establishing local churches and afterwards setting them in order by ordaining elders, after which these ministers returned to Antioch, gathered the church together, and gave them a report of their work. Antioch was, therefore, an operative center.

Operative centers

At a later time Paul established the truth in Ephesus, the chief city of Proconsular Asia. As might naturally be expected from the strategic position and political importance of that city, Ephesus also became an operative center for Christianity, "so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). Thessalonica in Macedonia and Corinth in Achaia are other examples of the kind.

The work of the church naturally fell into these geographical units; therefore the word "church"

is sometimes used as a collective term designating a body of regional congregations. The church "throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria" (Acts 9:31), "the seven churches which are in Asia" (Rev. 1:11), "the churches of Macedonia" (2 Cor. 8:1), "the churches of Galatia" (1 Cor. 16:1).

Regional units

We must bear in mind, however, that this regional concept of the church was not an integral part of fundamental apostolic church government, but was merely incidental, the result of geographical location. In fundamental analysis distinctions are always drawn between things that are *different,* not between things of the same kind. These regional churches were not different kinds of churches; they were not bound together in separate groups by an external organization which placed a wall between them and other congregations of the saints. There was no authority here for the national-church theory nor for the sectarian church idea. Geographical separation there was, but not denominationalism.

We have already shown from Paul's writings that under his ministry both Jews and Gentiles were united in one body, "the *same* body." That these regional units to which we have referred were no denial of this clear truth, but that collectively they constituted one body, is further shown by the indications we have of their *operative unity.* Notwith-

Common bond of unity

standing the poor facilities for communication and travel in those days, which made general cooperation very difficult, and notwithstanding the fact that the record of historic Christianity in the Acts is exceedingly brief, we have, nevertheless, clear proof that there was cooperation throughout the apostolic church. Two instances, one of a business nature, the other ecclesiastical, establish this point. The churches of at least three provinces of the Roman Empire—Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia—united under Paul's direction in establishing a weekly financial system, the immediate object of which was to assist in accomplishing a particular object in which they were all interested (2 Cor. 8:9; 1 Cor. 16:1-3). The ecclesiastical example is the council of the apostles and elders held in Jerusalem and recorded in Acts 15. A question of doctrine and practise arose in Antioch; the church there was not able to settle it; therefore it was "determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other with them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question" (verse 2).

This was not a general council of the church. No other sections or provinces were represented. Nor did it meet as a legislative body, even though there were present specially inspired apostles, to whom had been given the commission to unfold the gospel as an authoritative revelation. It is clear that the ministers of this council even sought

to avoid the legislative function. "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things" (verse 28). While this incident does not prove an administrative human headship of the whole church centralized at Jerusalem, it does prove that the individual congregations were not isolated units, but that they had respect for, and sought the advice and counsel of, older established congregations, and particularly of those general ministers whose gifts, qualifications, and reputation fitted them for general care of all the churches.

When we consider the divine nature of the church's organization, with the ever-living Christ working mightily in all his ministers and through them in particular administering its government, we can see that the entire church was necessarily one body joined together in a common fellowship and actually laboring together in the performance of common tasks.

Bishop and elder

The presbytery, to whom was given particular oversight and government of the church, was set apart by the Holy Ghost for this special work. Different terms, such as "elder" and "bishop," were used to designate this office. The term "bishop," which literally means *overseer*, implies the duties of the office, while "elder" denotes its rank. That these terms were used interchangeably and applied to the same order of persons is proved by Acts 20:28

(cf. 17); Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1, 8; Tit. 1:5, 7; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2. This was admitted by many early writers, as Jerome, Augustine, Urban II, Petrus Lombardus, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and others.

From the general classification already given, let us proceed to the specific. This body was made up of elders or bishops. The fact that the terms "elder" and "bishop" were applied to all the presbyters shows equality of rank; that the office was one. We find, however, that these elders as individuals were diversified in their gifts and callings in accordance with the specific work which the Holy Ghost designed them to perform. Under one classification there were, broadly speaking, two kinds of elders—local and general; that is, those whose sphere of operation was particularly local and those whose influence, work, and responsibility extended beyond any congregational limitation. This distinction was not made arbitrarily, however; for it was essential to the performance of the twofold class of work to be done and was the inevitable result of that operation of the Spirit in individual ministers which fitted them particularly for these distinctive lines of activity.

To be still more specific, we must go a step farther and consider the reason why and the process by which ministers became differentiated from other saints. In this we shall find the inner secret, both of particular spiritual organization and of divine church government. The apostle says, "By

one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" and "God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 12:13, 18). These texts suggest more than a mere attachment to the body: they imply *functional activity in the body.* The functions of the body as described by Paul means the exercise of spiritual gifts. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit . . . there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God *which worketh all in all.* But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (1 Cor. 12:4-11).

Divine gifts

The foregoing scripture is a mere enumeration of the gifts that God implanted in the church as a body. The more particular application of these gifts and their relation to church organization and government are given further on in the same chapter. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church.

Basis of ministerial authority

first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? *But covet earnestly the best gifts''* (verses 27-31).

Comparison of verses 4 to 11 with verses 27 to 31 of the chapter just quoted shows conclusively that one is the counterpart of the other, the latter merely amplifying and explaining the former. From this clear teaching it is evident that the work of apostleship, of teaching, of governing, etc., were all based upon and grew out of divine gifts implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

The same truth is taught by Paul in another place. Speaking of Christ, the apostle says, "When he ascended up on high, he . . . *gave gifts unto men* . . . and he gave some, *apostles;* and some, *prophets;* and some, *evangelists;* and some, *pastors* and *teachers;* for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:8-12).

According to these scriptures, the very governmental positions of the church with their authority and responsibility were the product of those gifts and qualifications bestowed upon certain individuals in particular. Such gifts could be legitimately coveted with a view to spiritual edification of the body (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:12). "If a man

desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (1 Tim. 3:1). "Helps" doubtless included that class of assistants commonly called deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-11).

Since in the primitive church organization and government were determined by the divine gifts and callings possessed by individuals, it is evident that we have in this something totally different from that later conception of church government as a mere human arrangement. At a subsequent time, as we shall show, church government was patterned after the forms of political government in that it was vested inherently in men. Four such forms have been developed—the imperial, or papal; the episcopal; the presbyterial; and the congregational. While these four differ in external form, they are all alike in fundamental character, in that they assume that the governing power rests inherently in *men.*

None of these forms of government represent the New Testament church. The organization and government of that church was based upon the *charisma,* or divine gifts and callings, of individuals composing the church. The power and authority of an apostle or of an evangelist, for example, did not rest upon any selection or appointment made by men. The church did not act in a corporate capacity and confer ecclesiastical power and authority upon any one. All such power and authority came direct from God through the Holy

Spirit, and it was in God's name and by his authority alone that they acted. The organization of the church was therefore charismatic. If, for example, the gifts of an apostle were conferred by the Holy Spirit upon an individual, he possessed apostolic responsibility and authority. The brethren recognized such gifts when these were evident, and submitted themselves voluntarily to such spiritual leadership and oversight; for at this period there had not been developed that ecclesiastical system by which human election and appointment gave positions and authority to men. In fact, we shall clearly show later that the true church can not be *legally* organized. Every attempt of men to assume the reins of authority and give governmental form and administrative direction to the church has been denominational and sectarian.

The true church was the whole family of God directed by his Holy Spirit. Ministerial appointment, with its authority and responsibility, was therefore divine. We have seen that through the spiritual operation called the new birth, one became a member of Christ, and hence by divine right belonged to whichever congregation of the church he might be able to associate with; but that in practical experience, such local membership involved recognition on the part of the other members. So it was with the divine appointment to the ministry. The only other essential to its practical operation was simply recog-

Ordination

nition of that call. Such recognition, in the last analysis, belonged to the whole church (1 Tim. 3:2-7; Tit. 1:6-9), but was given formally by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Plurality of local elders

The development of ministers in an apostolic church was a divine, natural process, the inevitable result of the emphasis placed on the gifts and callings of the Spirit. This free exercise of the Spirit's gifts working in the members doubtless accounts for the plurality of ruling elders found in those local churches. See Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 5:16, 17; Tit. 1:5. It could not be otherwise as long as the churches were Spirit-filled, working congregations and the Spirit of God had his way. The system that limited local church government to a one-man rule originated in the apostasy, after the gifts of the Spirit had died out. It is simply one part of that great system of human organization that developed the full-grown papacy. Of this we shall learn more hereafter.

The same principles that developed local ministers produced also ministers of the general class. While some naturally became "pastors," "teachers," and "helpers" in the local church, particular gifts and qualifications fitted others for "apostles" and "evangelists," whose particular sphere was general oversight and work in the churches. The prophet was not limited to either class.

As it is not germane to my present purpose, I shall not here attempt to define the various phases of ministerial work designated by various terms but all included under the one generic term "elder." The work described by the term "apostle," however, requires brief notice, on account of its bearing on the subject of church government. The fact that Paul had particular "care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:28) and that he gave special instructious to Timothy and Titus, other ministers (1 Tim. 5:21; Tit. 1:5), forms the basis for the episcopacy argument—church rule by a superior order of clergy called bishops.

Apostolic oversight

"Apostle" literally signifies "a planter." The term belongs specifically to the first founders of the Christian faith, but is loosely applied in a more general sense to any minister who plants Christianity in a new territory. It is clear that the first apostles were especially inspired for a particular work in laying the foundations of the Christian church and in writing the New Testament Scriptures. Hence the apostolic office in this special sense passed away with them. But there was, nevertheless, an apostolic work such as planting and overseeing the infant work in a new field, and in this sense Barnabas also was an apostle (Acts 13:46 with 14:4).

That the word "apostle" really signified a planter and was therefore descriptive of the kind

of work done is shown by the words of Paul himself: "For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:8). And again, he says to the Corinthians, "If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am *to you;* for *the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord"* (1 Cor. 9:2). In another place he says to the same church, "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15).

The special, personal relation that the apostle, or planter, sustained to the work which he had founded and over which he exercised general jurisdiction, was but temporary, a sort of fatherly care. He was obliged to oversee the work as a whole, including young ministers, until it became thoroughly established. After others were able for the work and the apostle's special oversight was withdrawn, there might be ten thousand other instructors, but *no more fathers.* This disproves entirely the episcopal idea as an essential feature of church government. The apostle Peter even classes himself simply as an elder in common with other elders (1 Pet. 5:1). But with the exception of the original apostles, who were specially commissioned to reveal the doctrine and message of the gospel and to establish the Christian faith, the difference existing between elders in the primitive

church was not a difference in kind, but in degree only, varying in accordance with their ability to put forth some portion of that moral and spiritual power by which alone Christ governs his church.

PART II
The Church in History

CHAPTER V

CORRUPTION OF EVANGELICAL FAITH

It is not my purpose to write an ecclesiastical history, but in order to make clear the work of final reformation, it will be necessary to present at least a brief sketch of historic Christianity, outlining particularly those leading features which show a radical departure from the true church as originally constituted by our Lord and his apostles.

"The faith"

In the days of primitive Christianity there was something called "the gospel," "the truth," "the form of sound words," "*the faith.*" To understand its fundamental nature is not difficult, for it has been preserved and handed down to us in the writings of the New Testament. According to this record, the gospel message, or "the faith," centered in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died and rose again that he might be a "Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31). "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). Around this central fact of salvation from sin through faith in Christ clustered those other truths and facts which either necessarily resulted from the new relationship of redeemed humanity

with God or were essential to its visible manifestation and propagation. Prominent among these features were the entire sanctification of believers, holy life and conduct, the baptism, gifts, and leadership of the Holy Spirit, and the visible unity and relationship of believers in one body, the church.

An apostasy foretold

I need not take time or space to describe the wonderful successes of Christianity as long as the primitive purity and power of the gospel message was sustained and its results realized in a living, Spirit-filled church. But facts compel me to record a change from that happy condition. This transition was foreseen by those who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Paul declared: "Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1); "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). Peter predicted, "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies" (2 Pet. 2:1). Jesus himself declared, "Many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:11, 12).

Paul gives a more particular description of the coming apostasy in the second chapter of Second Thessalonians. Asserting that the second coming

of Christ was not at that time imminent, he says: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a *falling away* first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (verses 3, 4).

The development of the "man of sin," which was occasioned by the "falling away," was to be gradual, but should finally assume great proportions, "so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that *he* is God." The apostle further states: "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (verses 7, 8). We should not seek for the fulfilment of this prediction in those minor sects and heresies which at an early date arose and soon passed away: the description refers to some great power occupying the greatest prominence, making the most pretentious claims, a power that is to endure until the second advent of Christ. We must, therefore, look for its fulfilment in what we may term the main line of historic Christianity.

The "falling away" from the simple truths and standards of the gospel began at a very early

date. The mystery of iniquity was already working in the apostles' day. Before the close of the first century we find in the churches of Asia Minor a sad deflection from their primitive condition. The church at Ephesus had left its first love (Rev. 2:4); the church at Pergamos was tolerating false teachers and being ruined by false doctrines (2:14, 15); Thyatira had lost the spirit of holy judgment against wrong-doing and was therefore affected by a shocking degree of immorality (2:20-23); the message to Sardis was, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, *and art dead* (3:1); Laodicea had become so lukewarm that the Lord said, "I will spew thee out of my mouth" (3:15, 16).

First evidences of decline

The transition from the apostles to the age of the early church fathers is involved in considerable darkness. Not until the middle of the second century, when Justin Martyr appears on the scene, does the church emerge from its obscurity into the clear light of history. The apostolic fathers—Clement of Rome, Ignatius, the Pastor of Hermas, Papias, and the unknown author of the Epistle to Diognetus—all these lived and wrote during that transitional period, and they could have told us much, but they have told us little. We can not but admire the beautiful spirit in which they wrote, and their style is earnest and vital. Nevertheless, we discern in these works two leading tendencies

The apostolic fathers

which stand, so to speak, as prophecies of what was to predominate in the ecclesiastical thought of succeeding centuries.

In the mind of the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, the grand central thought is the incarnation and the spiritual presence of Christ in redeemed humanity, by which they are led to the "free imitation of God," as a result of which they become to the world what the soul is to the body—its life and the means of holding it together. This teaching is an epitome of the Greek theology developed later by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Athanasius. But in Papias, who attaches much importance to oral traditions that "came from the living and abiding voice"; in Ignatius, who exalts the bishop above other presbyters; and in Clement, who, writing as a Roman, is concerned with matters of administration and subordination to authority—in these we discern the beginnings of the Latin theology developed later by Tertullian, Irenæus, Cyprian, and Augustine, which produced the papacy, and which, as we shall show, has in a great measure dominated the ecclesiastical thought of the world until the present day.

The Ante-Nicene age

After emerging into the clear field of historic Christianity in the time of Justin Martyr, we find everywhere evidences of a rapidly developing apostasy. In one respect we approach an examination of the Ante-Nicene church with feelings of admiration. This

was a heroic age, an age of Christian martyrs. The struggles of Christianity against the powers of heathenism enthroned in the Roman Empire and throughout the world form a bright chapter in the annals of historic deeds and supreme loyalty to lofty ideals. When we view the subject from this angle, it would almost seem to be an act of irreverence or of sacrilege to call in question the doctrines and practises of that period when the church was baptized by fire and waded through rivers of blood. Reverence for the martyrs and for their noble efforts to extend the cause of Christ is praiseworthy, but in justice to truth, we must remember that even the martyrs were not inspired teachers commissioned to build a model for all succeeding ages. That they were heroic does not prove them infallible. We should never hesitate, therefore, to compare their teaching with the pure doctrines of the Word of God, and wherein there is any lack of harmony, we should be guided by the truth as it is in Jesus.

However much we may admire the early church fathers, we can not help noticing the sharp contrast between them and the first apostles; between their writings and the sublime, inspired teaching of the divine Word. If, after reading Paul, Peter, or John, we turn to Tertullian, Irenæus, or Cyprian, we instinctively realize that we have, so to speak, been transferred from sunny Italy to frigid Siberia. We are conscious of a change to

another era, and to another country. Notwithstanding the fact that we find numerous familiar objects, we know that we are moving in another atmosphere amid foreign surroundings.

Growth of ritualism

The church of the Middle Ages was the natural fruitage of the seeds planted during the second and third centuries. There we began to notice particularly foreign elements which stand out in bold contrast to the simple forms of primitive Christianity. One of these innovations was the development of the ritualistic spirit, according to which undue importance was attached to particular forms of worship, such as time, place, positions of the body, and ceremonial observances in general. Take baptism for an example. Apart from erroneous notions concerning the efficacy of baptism, which will be referred to under another head, the writings of the church fathers abound with the most minute and puerile details concerning how the act is to be performed—details of catechism, of consecration of waters, of dressing and undressing, exorcism, anointing from head to foot with oil, the laying on of hands, etc., all of which were to be carried out in the most exacting and solemn manner.

As an example of the ritualistic character of Christian worship at the beginning of the third century, I will cite a passage from Tertullian. In the third chapter of his work De Corona, this celebrated Latin father undertakes to defend cus-

toms and practises that he confesses were received "on the ground of tradition alone." He says:

Example from Tertullian

"I shall begin with baptism. When we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, and his pomp, and his angels. Whereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the gospel.* Then when we are taken up (as new-born children) we taste, first of all, a mixture of milk and honey, and from that day we abstain from the daily bath for a whole week. We take also, in congregations before daybreak, and from the hand of none but the president, the sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord both commanded to be done at mealtimes and enjoined to be taken by all alike. As often as the anniversary comes round, we make offerings for the dead as birthday honors. We count shouting or kneeling in worship on the Lord's day to be unlawful. We rejoice in the same privilege also from Easter to Whitsunday. We feel pained should any wine or bread, even though our own, be cast upon the ground. At every forward step and movement, at every going in and

*Tertullian is the earliest writer that clearly and unmistakably teaches trine immersion, or records its practise. But here he honestly confesses that it is a "**somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the gospel.**"

out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when we sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, we trace upon the forehead the sign of the cross."

In words immediately following, at the beginning of Chapter 4, Tertullian says: "If for these and other such rules you insist upon having positive Scriptural injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be held forth to you as the originator of them, custom as their strengthener, and faith as their observer."

According to this confession, all the ceremonial observances here set forth are without Scriptural authority. When we read in the New Testament concerning the simple act of baptizing believers, and compare it with the customs and practises that had grown up in the Ante-Nicene church, we do not wonder that evangelical faith was soon afterwards almost entirely lost in ritualistic forms; that, like the Pharisees of old, men made the faith of God of none effect by their traditions.

False doctrines and heresies

Another evidence of the decline of evangelical faith is found in the presence of many false doctrines among the leaders of so-called orthodox Christianity in that period of which I now write. Paul not only taught that at a later time some should "depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and devils" (1 Tim. 4: 1), but he referred to some who

had already "erred concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 6:21), and named two persons, 'who, concerning the truth, had erred, saying that the resurrection was past already, and overthrew the faith of some' (2 Tim. 2:18). After the death of the apostles, error made deeper inroads, and its baneful influence cast a shadow over the church, which rapidly deepened into the darkness of spiritual night.

Baptismal regeneration

One of the earliest corruptions of apostolic truth concerned the design and purpose of baptism. It was not long until unscriptural significance was attached to the literal rite itself, so that what was originally a mere sign, was substituted for the thing signified, and thus baptism took the place of spiritual regeneration. In several places in the writings of Justin Martyr, who lived about the middle of the second century, his language seems to attach undue importance to the literal rite; but other passages from the same author indicate that he had not as yet entirely lost sight of the apostolic standard. In his Dialog with Trypho, chapter 14, he says: "We have believed and testify that that very baptism which he [Isaiah] announced is alone able to purify those who have repented . . . and what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize the soul from wrath and covetousness, from envy and from hatred, and lo, the body is pure."

In his First Apology, chapter 61, the same

writer draws a clear Biblical distinction between spiritual regeneration secured through repentance and faith, and ritual regeneration in baptism as a mere outward sign of the inward work. He says: "I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ . . . as many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is truth, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the Universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water."

Other writers of the period under consideration, however, praise the saving efficacy of baptism in the most exalted terms. According to their minds, it is the actual means of the redemption of sins, not a mere literal rite expressing ceremonially the work of God's Spirit within the heart; it is an illumination; it extinguishes the fire of sin; it removes the unclean spirits from men and seals them for heaven. Tertullian wrote extensively on this subject. In his work On Baptism, chapters 3 to 8, he maintains the doctrine of baptismal regeneration "by which we are washed from the sins of

our former blindness and set free for eternal life." He declares that by this act men are prepared to receive the Holy Ghost; that in the literal act, "the spirit is corporeally washed in the waters, and the flesh is, in the same, spiritually cleansed." Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (third century), in his treatise concerning the Baptism of Heretics, teaches the same doctrine in no uncertain terms.

Other erroneous doctrines and practises

The limits of this work preclude the historic treatment of the rise and development of the host of false doctrines and practises that finally bound the people in the thralldom of superstition and plunged the world into the darkness of spiritual night. One who is free from such influences can scarcely read without feelings of disgust the elaborate treatises of these church fathers wherein they extol the virtues of virginity as forming a new order of life, as an evidence of divinity, as making virgins while in this world "equal to the angels of God," and as a certain surety of special rewards in heaven. From this false standard proceeded at length the celibacy of the clergy and monkery with all their attendant evils. And the time would fail me to tell of the introduction of images and image-worship in the Western Church and of that superstitious regard for miserable relics of every description and kind. True evangelical faith was at length lost to view, buried beneath the rubbish of men's traditions. The treat-

ment of such matters, however, belongs to the church historian, and as the general facts are well-known, it is unnecessary here to make more than a brief reference to them so as to prepare the mind for that treatment of the reformation which is a special object of the present work.

CHAPTER VI

RISE OF ECCLESIASTICISM

In order to understand the place which the work of reformation has in the plan and purpose of God respecting his church, we must carefully observe the twofold character of the apostasy. Both these phases are clearly outlined in that remarkable prediction of Paul to which reference has already been made, recorded in the second chapter of Second Thessalonians. The first phase, described as "*a falling away,*" was that decline from true Christianity which we have considered in the preceding chapter as the Corruption of Evangelical Faith. The second phase was the rise and development of a foreign element which was from its beginning "the mystery of iniquity" and which in certain respects usurped the true place of Jehovah himself in spiritual worship in the temple of God. This phase now demands our special attention.

Two phases of apostasy

Since the sixteenth century reformation a large part of the Christian world has renounced the right of the pope to sit as the supreme earthly head of the church, but we shall show later that these same modern Christians who have sought the restoration of the evangelical *faith* have not discarded the essential elements of the papal hierarchical system, but have perpetuated them in

their own ecclesiastical constitutions, and that this relic of medievalism is the chief barrier to a reunited Christendom and the restoration of pure apostolic Christianity. It is highly essential, therefore, that this phase of the apostasy be carefully considered. It is not enough to reject the pope and his college of cardinals. If that tree, as judged by its fruits, is an "evil" tree, we should seek to know where, when, and by whom the evil seed from which it grew was first planted, and then *reject it from the roots up.* Then, and not until then, can the work of reformation be made complete. We have, therefore, to trace the rise and development of what may be forcibly expressed by the apparently pleonastic phrase *human ecclesiasticism.*

Divine authority vs. positional authority

We have already seen that in the church, as originally constituted, organization, authority, and government proceeded from the divine and not from the human. The agents whom Christ used in performing his work and in overseeing his church were called and endowed by the Holy Spirit, and this divine endowment was the real basis of their authority and responsibility. Paul's authority and responsibility as an apostle, for example, was not positional authority, or authority proceeding from a certain position to which he had been appointed or elected. His authority was divine, and out of that divine authority grew his positional

responsibility as the "apostle of the Gentiles." Over and over he affirmed that he was an apostle, "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:1). On the same principle the position, work, and responsibility of all the members of the body of Christ grew out of the gifts and qualifications possessed by them, and thus the church was divinely organized and divinely governed.

Original bond of union

The bonds which united primitive Christians in one body were essentially moral and spiritual. Christ was their ever-living and ever-acting head. Their life proceeded from him, and they were all one in him. While those living in widely separated districts consulted together concerning matters of general concern, or united in cooperative efforts to accomplish common tasks, there is not the slightest evidence that there was an external human organization of the primitive church—either sectionally, nationally, or universally—centralized under a human headship of the administrative, legislative, and judicial kind. Christ was the head of the general church, the head of all the local churches, the head of all the individual members of the church. In him, the source of their common life, the primitive Christians were essentially one, and by his Spirit he operated in all hearts, in all the individual churches, and in all the ministers whose particular gifts and qualifications fitted them for divinely appointed oversight, both local

and general. By this means the primitive church was able to perform the work of Christ harmoniously and present to the world the grand spectacle of one body.

First steps to ecclesiasticism

Jesus taught the humble equality of the New Testament ministry. "All ye are brethren" (Matt. 23:8). According to the New Testament they were all of one general order or rank, although greatly diversified in gifts and qualifications and the kind of work accomplished by each. The first example we have in Scripture of *positional authority* in the ministry as distinguished from the authority of the Holy Spirit, is the case of Diotrephes, of whom the apostle John wrote in his third epistle. We are also informed as to the nature of the authority exercised by him and the direction in which it led. It was *human authority,* something additional and foreign to the authority and government through the Holy Spirit, and the first example of church government by a single man. It proceeded from the evil root of pride and ambition, the love of "preeminence" among the brethren; and this usurped power and authority led to a judicial process by which innocent brethren were 'cast out of the church.'

What a contrast this presents to that New Testament picture of the divine ecclesia, exhibiting the highest form of human society known to history, a body in which every member had his gift

and use for it. Among these many activities, oversight and preaching had their place, but did not constitute the whole sum of Christian service. Paul describes Christ as the living head "from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the *effectual working in the measure of every part,* maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16). The object of the ministerial function was "the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (verse 12, R. V.).

In his early epistle to the Philippians, Paul makes reference to the officers that guided that church. He sends greetings "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1). Polycarp, writing to the same church in the next century, addresses the "presbyters and deacons," showing that the apostolic order was still preserved there.

Bishops vs. Presbyters

In the Ignatian epistles, however, written early in the second century, there appears positional authority of a new order. In place of the New Testament standard of a plurality of elders, or bishops, jointly teaching and guiding the local church, we find recognition of an office which was superior to that of the presbyters and to whose incumbents alone the term "bishop" was applied. A few extracts

from his writings will make clear this recognition of a threefold order of the ministry—bishops, elders, and deacons. "Wherefore, it is fitting that ye should run together in accordance with the will of your bishop, which thing also ye do. For your justly renowned presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp" (To the Ephesians, chap. 4). "He is subject to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery as to the will of Jesus Christ" (To the Magnesians, chap. 2). And again, in the same epistle he says, "I exhort you to study to do all things with a divine harmony, while your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbytery in the place of the assembly of the apostles" (chap. 6). "In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as the appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the Sanhedrin of God, and assembly of the apostles. Apart from these there is no church" (To the Trallians, chap. 3). To the Smyrnæans he writes: "See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father. . . . Let no man do anything connected with the church without the bishop" (chap. 8). "It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God" (chap. 8). "It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who hon-

ors the bishop has been honored of God; but he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does [in reality] serve the devil'' (chap. 9).

That this early recognition of a superior order of ministers was a distinct innovation is also shown from the literature of that period. In the Shepherd of Hermas, dating from the first part of the second century, elders and presbyters are distinctly named but no bishop in contrast therewith. In the so-called ''Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,'' also dating from the first part of the second century, bishops and deacons only are named as teachers and leaders of the church, showing that the original signification of the term ''bishop'' is here retained. Clement of Rome, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of the ministry as an institution of the apostles, but he mentions, nevertheless, only a twofold order—elders and deacons, presbyters and deacons, or bishops and deacons. The same classification is made in the second epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, a work which is generally ascribed to another author; so also in the epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians.

The superior office of *the* bishop as distinguished from the local presbytery was, therefore, an innovation, but in process of time its recognition became general. It is probable that in the local presbytery of the primitive church some one minister

excelled in special gifts and qualifications and consequently became a natural leader of his brethren. *Such* leadership was of God, because it was based on the authority proceeding from the Spirit of God. Such was the leadership which Paul held in a sphere of activity wider than a local congregation. But such was not positional authority or authority proceeding from a humanly created superior office and appointment thereto. It was of divine order. But this fact of distinguished leadership at first, doubtless furnished an excuse for the creation of a distinct office with carefully defined functions and limits of authority. The power of the bishop thus constituted advanced steadily. The churches of the cities where they were located extended their influences over smaller towns in the surrounding territory, and thus the city bishop came to rule over the elders of the lesser churches of a district.

Innovation becomes general

When the first step toward ecclesiasticism was definitely taken, by the recognition of official position, authority, and government proceeding from human appointment alone, the way was prepared for rapid progress toward a highly organized system of man-rule. When the bishops met in provincial councils, special deference was given those bishops from cities of great political importance, and they were exalted to the presidency of these councils, and this in time led to the recognition of a new

Development of hierarchy

order of church officials—*metropolitans.* Later the metropolitans seemed too numerous for general utility in governmental functions; therefore general leadership gradually became centralized more and more in the bishops or metropolitans of certain of the most important cities, until they were finally given recognition as an order superior to that of metropolitans and were styled *patriarchs.* The first Council of Nice recognized this superior authority possessed by the patriarchates of Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch. The General Council of Constantinople placed the bishop of Constantinople in the same rank with the other three patriarchs, and the General Council of Chalcedon exalted the see of Jerusalem to a similar dignity. The race for leadership between the patriarchates then began. On account of the Moslem invasion in the seventh century, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch fell away from their former positions of greatness; therefore the rivalry for leadership was henceforth between the see of Rome and the bishop of Constantinople. Rome possessed many natural advantages, and consequently the bishop of Rome gained the greater prestige. The full-fledged papacy was the result.

What produced that transition from the humble apostolic church of the brethren to the medieval church of the impious Hildebrand, who caused monarchs to tremble on their thrones? The change resulted from two particular causes, and

it is highly essential to our purpose that we understand them. One was a misconception both of the constitution of the true church itself as designed by its Founder and of Christ's perpetual relationship to it; and the second was the imperialistic tendencies of that age to which the first error naturally exposed the church.

Fundamental causes

It is unnecessary here to recite at length that conception of the primitive church which we have described in preceding chapters as the concrete expression of the kingdom of God. Such was the only true *catholic,* or universal, church. Its catholicity, however, was a moral and spiritual dominion exercised over men by the truth and Spirit of God, and was rendered visible only in the society of redeemed believers who held the truth and bore its appropriate fruits of righteousness. Being composed of the redeemed, it lovingly embraced within its membership the entire brotherhood of Christ.

It is not too much to say that in the age in which Christianity first appeared it was difficult for men to appreciate the conception of a purely moral and spiritual authority which was to be universal and perpetual. Another idea of catholicity soon began to take possession of men's minds—the idea of a temporal and earthly organization of the kingdom of heaven. In this conception of the church the bond of

Two theories of catholicity

union was not moral and spiritual—not the inevitable result of divine life and love in the individual members—but its pretended catholicity was to be secured by official, administrative, legislative, and judicial functions under a human headship and a self-perpetuating human magistracy. Such was the "mystery of iniquity," and in its developed form historically it was "the man of sin." The student of the New Testament can easily see that the great Founder never intended that the boundary of his church should be determined by the administrative functions of a self-perpetuating clerical corporation. But, on the other hand, the real church embraces the entire *spiritual brotherhood,* and out of this spiritual membership was developed by the Spirit of God the capacity and authority to teach, guide, and instruct. What a contrast these two conceptions present!

The power of the keys

Out of that worldly conception of the kingdom of God grew the Romish figment of the "power of the keys." According to this idea, Christ constituted his ministers a sort of clerical, close corporation invested with direct authority over souls so that without their priestly mediation the kingdom of heaven is forever shut against men. The words "keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:19) are evidently nothing more than a figurative expression indicating the moral influence in the kingdom which Peter in particular should wield with pe-

culiar energy and efficiency. According to Matt. 18:18 all the apostles and others were to exercise the same functions. In time, this expression denoting moral influence and usefulness in the service of Christ was tortured into an engine of despotism and made the means of spiritual tyranny over the consciences of millions of men and women. The corporation entrusted with such power durst not be resisted, and the church was identical with the hierarchy.

But all of Rome's boasted catholicity, centralized in an official, administrative corporation, is a chimera; for it is a fact that multitudes are accepted of God as members of the divine family who are not identified with the hierarchy. The real catholic church, embracing the whole spiritual brotherhood, is therefore something else.

Main source of ecclesiasticism

But we have not yet reached in this discussion the tap-root of the evil tree of human ecclesiasticism. The fundamental error underlying all other errors on this subject, was the idea of an absent Christ. Notwithstanding the definite assertions of our Lord, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" and "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"—notwithstanding these reassuring promises and the definite statements of the apostles which represent Christ as the ever-living and ever-acting head of the church, soon after the apostolic

period men lost the consciousness of the divine presence and began to think and to act as if Christ were indeed absent and would not return again for thousands of years. The presence of gigantic evils in the world with no apparent available means of redressing them, the dead weight of heathenism, and the disturbing influences of speculative Oriental philosophies impressed upon the conscience of the world a despairing pessimism. In the midst of this trial there was a revival of the Platonic philosophy. The treatise of Plato that made the most profound impression upon the religious thought of the second century was the "Timæus," wherein the Deity is pictured as withdrawn from the world into a distant heaven separated from all creation because of the evil with which matter is essentially connected. With God withdrawn from the world and Christ absent on a long journey, what was man to do? What was the hope of the world?

Here ecclesiasticism found its real opportunity. Here human authority and government could be and was substituted for that spiritual dominion of Christ which gave life, form, and character to his church in primitive days. Here grew up that conception of the church as identical with the hierarchy whose power and authority was handed down by direct descent from the apostles and without whose priestly mediation there was no hope of salvation. Here was introduced the idea of

world-wide centralization of administrative, legislative, and judicial functions in a self-perpetuating human headship. What a contrast! With Christ absent, the church an ark for the saving of the world, the truth a mere deposit made to the church for safe keeping to be handed down like a heirloom from generation to generation, and with a self-perpetuating priestly corporation as master of the destinies of the universe, we are prepared to understand the tyrannical rule of the church of Hildebrand and Innocent III. Traced to its source, this evil system is found to have sprung from that worldly conception of the kingdom of Christ which was substituted for the inconceivably grander conception of its Founder—a kingdom whose dominion is moral and spiritual under the personal supervision of Christ himself in all ages, and which embraces in its membership the entire spiritual brotherhood.

CHAPTER VII

THE REFORMATION

The age of popery's greatest glory was the world's midnight. I have not attempted to give an adequate description of that long reign of superstition and error preceding the reformation of the sixteenth century. Such is the particular province of ecclesiastical historians. I have simply confined the discussion to certain features essential to our present purpose.

One point of importance I have endeavored to impress, namely, that the papal hierarchy, with all its attendant evils, corruption, superstition, and spiritual despotism, was the logical successor of the Ante-Nicene church; that the ripened fruits of papalism were the direct results of the seeds of error planted in the second and third centuries. In view of this fact, one is led to inquire why true Christianity was not permanently buried in oblivion beyond the possibility of resurrection, how any reformation could be possible.

If Christianity were nothing more than a human religion, its reformation at such a period of decline and corruption would appear impossible. But Christianity was of divine origin. No matter how deeply it was buried under the rubbish of human tradition and superstition, no matter how grossly it was perverted and misunderstood by men, it

still retained within itself the vital spark of divine life, the living principle of reformation.

First cause of reformation

The secret of this reformatory power was Jesus Christ himself, the great ever-living head of the church. Notwithstanding the decline of faith and morals among those professing Christ, the wonderful character of Jesus still stood out with remarkable clearness and power in the records of the New Testament and could not but exert a tremendous influence in spite of prevailing standards; could not but shed rays of light and warmth in the midst of the surrounding darkness. Although men's ideas of the church became perverted, they could not entirely lose sight of the great Founder of the church, and they could not escape the conviction that the record of the founding of that church was given in the writings of the New Testament and that these writings were worthy of peculiar veneration. Perhaps this is the main reason why the learning of antiquity was chiefly preserved in monasteries and churches. There were ecclesiastics in all these ages who were acquainted with the Scriptures in Latin, and this acquaintance tended to preserve the knowledge of Jesus the Christ as portrayed in the original gospel records. The history of that epoch proves that there were men who loved the Lord more than priestly forms and ceremonial observances. John Wyclif, Jerome of Prague, John Huss, and others experienced that deeper

longing for personal relationship with Christ, and they proclaimed the gospel of Christ in a manner that could not be understood by the hierarchy of their times.

Jesus was indeed the Christ of God. The light which shone forth from his presence could not be totally obscured, and the moral power and influence of his life and teaching could not be destroyed. The revival of classical learning restored the Greek Testament to western Europe and attracted the attention of students and learned men in all the monasteries and universities. While the hierarchy insisted on the exclusive right to interpret the Scriptures, the simple reading of these wonderful records could not but create new conceptions of truth which no clerical prohibition could banish. Life was springing up in the midst of death.

Classical learning

The Reformation was the sincere effort of honest men to restore the truth of primitive Christianity, that the world might again experience the triumph of evangelical faith. To the everlasting credit of the Continental reformers be it said that their motives were not selfish. They sought not for themselves freedom of thought and speech nor church power. Their immediate object was the restoration of the gospel; all other results were but secondary. Nothing is more certain than that at the first Luther had no idea of assailing the organization of

Love for truth

the papal church. Most of the reformers at the first still believed most earnestly in the imperial government of the universal church; and they relinquished this long-cherished ideal only when driven by force of circumstances which were at first unseen and unsuspected. Luther did not at first question the doctrine of the supremacy of the pope; but when he found that the reigning pope could not be reconciled with the principles of truth which he taught, Luther proposed to appeal the matters in question to a general council, notwithstanding the melancholy example, a century earlier, of the Council of Constance and the fate of John Huss and Jerome of Prague.

The real occasion for the outbreak of the Reformation was the papal traffic in indulgences.

Indulgences

Leo X had great need of money for the building of St. Peter's, and other undertakings, and in order to fill the coffers of the church he had recourse to the sale of indulgences. The power of dispensing these indulgences in Saxony in Germany was committed to a Dominican friar named Tetzel, a fanatical enthusiast who entertained the most extravagant notions concerning their efficacy in forgiving not only the sins already committed but even those which were contemplated. Luther's soul burned with righteous indignation. Of what use was the doctrine that forgiveness of sin came by the death of Christ on the cross if any sinner could obtain it from an

emissary of the pope for a pecuniary consideration. Luther felt that this infamous traffic was making the Word of God of none effect. He therefore drew up ninety-five theses against the doctrine of indulgences and nailed them on the church-door at Wittenberg. The printing-press scattered copies of these theses everywhere, and soon the continent of Europe was in a blaze of controversy. Such, in short, was the beginning of the Reformation and some of the causes leading thereto.

Gospel standard sought

The key-note of the reformers was, therefore, the gospel. The views of the reformers with respect to truth were not altogether harmonious, and it is evident that some of them had much clearer conception of the gospel than had others. Nevertheless, their primary purpose was the same. They were gradually forced to the conviction that Rome had made the faith of God of none effect by her traditions, errors, and superstitions, so much so as to make it practically unknown. It was the purpose of these heroic preachers to bring out these long-obscured truths and thus make them effectual in the saving of men. The main doctrine around which the Reformation centered was justification by faith independent of human mediation.

So far as the Reformation restored to the world right doctrine, it tended to correct the evils of that phase of the apostasy which we have characterized as the corruption of evangelical faith. But it

did not remove that other evil characteristic of the apostasy, the parent of nearly all other evils—*human ecclesiasticism*. Viewed from one angle, that power appears to have been modified; but from another point of view, we can see that what was formerly an imperial system of centralized ecclesiastical control simply ended now in nationally centralized systems perpetuating the same principles. Thus, from the centralized dominion of the papal hierarchy there sprang the national, or state, churches in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, England, Sweden, and Scotland.

Lingering influence of Rome

We have already shown that development of ecclesiasticism which culminated in the papacy. From the primitive autonomy of the local churches, there came the centralization and consolidation of churches sectionally under a human headship with administrative functions, then provincial or national centralization, then finally the primacy of Rome over them all. The reason for this is evident. When the moral and spiritual dominion of Christ's kingdom was lost to view or could not be appreciated, the wrong conception of the church as a world-empire naturally took possession of men's minds; for in that age vast, centralized, imperial power was the ideal government. When, however, the political empire fell, and men witnessed the ruin of their political ideal, they sought to realize the same universal conception in a world-church

possessing imperial powers under the pope of Rome.

National churches

At the period of the Reformation the Christian world had been in the grip of this world-church idea for more than a thousand years. As already stated, the reformers, whose minds were directed chiefly toward the restoration of evangelical doctrine, had at first no idea of breaking away from this standard. Evidently they had no conception of that moral and spiritual dominion of Christ by which alone he governs his church—a 'kingdom that is not of this world.' They therefore abandoned the world-church idea reluctantly, and not until the opposition of the hierarchy drove them to separation. When the issue was clearly drawn, they of course decided to obey God rather than man. Having no idea of the real spiritual character of the divine ecclesia, they had to content themselves with that *national* church unity which was still in their power.

The clergy, who had long been accustomed to the imperial tie, believed that a national headship was now necessary. The governments of Europe at that time were for the most part absolute monarchies, about the only limits to the sovereign power of these kings being the control which the pope exercised over the ecclesiastical affairs of the nations. From this control the Reformation liberated them. Therefore they eagerly took upon

themselves the oversight of the national churches, and thus came into existence the church-and-state system of Protestant Europe. To a great extent the power that the imperial head of the church lost was acquired by the national heads.

All this seemed perfectly consistent to the reformers. They felt the necessity of lodging somewhere that power of human control which had been formerly exercised by the pope. As one writer has said, "They could not understand that Christianity could prosper without a strongly organized and governed church or without the presence of a strong and vigorous hand ready at all times to repress dissent and enforce uniformity of faith and worship." The time of absolute religious freedom was not yet.

Ecclesiasticism perpetuated

As might be expected, numerous modifications of the principles and usages of the papal church occurred in the change from imperial control to the state-church system. This diversity took place in the different countries in accordance either with prevailing conditions and sentiments or with the whims and caprices of the reigning sovereigns. While some retained the episcopate, others greatly modified it or rejected it altogether. In forms of worship, ritual, and other things numerous changes were also made. But notwithstanding the diversity in forms of worship and in church polity, in two respects there was perfect agreement among all the

Reformed churches—two things brought over from the papacy—namely, first, the idea of a self-perpetuating clerical caste possessing in their corporate capacity legislative and judicial authority over the church; and second, the centralization under a human headship of administrative functions, instead of that local autonomy which prevailed in the congregations of apostolic times. The doctrine of the "power of the keys," a power wielded by a clerical corporation with authority to prescribe the very manner and form of worshiping God and to require men to comply therewith or else exclude them from gospel privileges. That doctrine was accepted without question. It was the same power in principle as that which was wielded so terribly by Gregory VII in the papal church of the eleventh century.

CHAPTER VIII

MODERN SECTS

A mental picture

Picture a keen observer living in the middle of the first century of our era. He travels about from place to place studying the development, nature, and fruits of the recently established religious phenomenon —Christianity. He observes the purity of its doctrines and the high moral standard exemplified in the lives of its adherents, and he inquires particularly concerning the secret of that mysterious bond which unites in one body and in one fellowship, sympathy, and love the entire society of believers in Jesus. He departs. After the lapse of long ages he returns near the beginning of the twentieth century, and lo, what is it that meets his astonished vision? The mournful spectacle of a divided Christendom; of rival sects compassing land and sea to make proselytes; of the spiritual alienation of those who, in reality, belong to the one divine family; of waste and inefficiency in methods of evangelical effort; not to mention the error, pride, and worldliness inherent in the gigantic ecclesiastical systems known as denominational churches. What a change!

It is useless to minimize the evils inherent in the sect system. Intelligent men the world over need not the services of an eye-specialist to see

clearly that there is something wrong with modern Christendom; that the sect system does not represent the standard of primitive Christianity, but that in reality the sect principle misrepresents the apostolic ideal as portrayed in the New Testament. We may as well face the facts honestly and seek for a remedy for this disease that has so long marred the beauty and corrupted the nature of the true Christian system.

Inherent evils

I cheerfully admit that God has worked among his people in all ages in accordance with the degree of light and truth which they possessed. But I can not forget that the greatest revivals of evangelical religion have either taken place in spite of the sect system or among those who had just made their escape from the bondage of ecclesiastical despotism and had not as yet become very deeply affected by the sectarian principle. To what source, then, are we to trace sects? What is their cause?

Alleged causes of sect-making

A large proportion of the Christian world would reply without hesitation that the existence of the modern sects is due to these two things: the principle of religious liberty and the limitations of human knowledge. Such an answer reveals a superficial view of the whole subject. Religious liberty among Christians existed in the primitive church before the rise of ecclesiastical tyranny over the conscience, and the

masses of men in those days were at least as limited in knowledge as are we. Still, the church was one; it was not divided into rival and hostile sects. There was no need in those days of constructing churches to conform to the limited capacity of men's minds; for there was already in existence a church sufficiently *catholic* in its nature and spirit to accommodate all classes of minds, because there was in operation the power of the Spirit of God which revealed truth to men and thus enlightened their minds and brought them into harmony with the divine standard. Concerning the principle of religious liberty, I shall have more to say hereafter.

Human limitations

The natural limitations of human knowledge may account for difference of opinion, but more than this is required to account for the entire system of organized sects such as we see it today. Millions of evangelical Christians possessing spiritual affinity and holding opinions no more divergent than often exist between members of the same sect, are, nevertheless, divided into independent, rival parties. Something else originated and now perpetuates that barrier between them.

When differences are fundamental and therefore unavoidable, they will become more pronounced under test than at any other time. If, during an epidemic, a physician believes that the method of treatment employed by another doctor

is actually killing the patients, his opposition to such a method will then be stronger than at any other time. As long as that method is simply a theory, it is harmless. Only when put into practise does it become dangerous.

It is a matter of common knowledge that evangelical Christians are not driven further apart but are really driven together whenever Christianity itself is placed under any special trial, as, for example, in foreign missionary work in heathen lands. And even in our own country, whenever a great local interest is taken in the work of soul-saving there is a corresponding tendency for Christians of different sects to ignore their differences of opinion and get together as if they believed in a common Lord over all and were all members of the same family. Thus, whenever the high tide of evangelism comes in, the landmarks of sects are scarcely visible; but whenever the tide goes out, behold, *the ancient boundaries of sects appear as before.* This fact proves that there are no fundamental reasons why sects should exist. It proves that in reality sects are a barrier to the true work of Christ; hence are, in their essential nature, antichristian. What, then, is the real cause of sects?

Traced to the original source, modern sects, we find, originated where the papacy originated—in the corruption of Christianity in the early centuries. All came from the same roots of error.

However modified and diversified in external form and in doctrinal teaching they may now be, they exhibit in their ecclesiastical constitutions a foreign character derived from the foreign stock from which they sprang. Into this system there have been engrafted many noble scions of truth from the "good olive-tree," and these have produced commendable fruits of righteousness. But we are here concerned with pointing out those fundamental characteristics of the system that are foreign to the true church of Jesus Christ.

True causes of sects

The first cause to which I call attention is an erroneous conception of the church itself. At the cost of some repetition I must point out that in the beginning the church was the universal company of the redeemed, the whole *spiritual brotherhood,* whether isolated members of Christ or those worshiping in local assemblies distributed over the earth. The tie which united these members of Christ in one body was their common faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and the life of the Spirit. But as in those times vast centralized imperial power was a divinity that every one worshiped, it was impossible properly to appreciate *the moral and spiritual dominion* of Christ by which alone he designed to rule his church; therefore men soon proceeded to pattern the church of Christ after the political government, first by grouping together under one

Erroneous ideas of church

administrative human headship the congregations of a province or section of the empire, and then finally uniting these different provinces under one administrative headship at Rome. From that day until the present time the church-idea that has generally prevailed in Christendom has been an organization fashioned according to the kingdoms of this world; a human organization in which the administrative functions of government are centralized under some form of human headship; a unity that is not moral and spiritual, but official and administrative, as well as legislative and judicial.

Wrong standard of church-membership

Coincident with the creation of foreign ideals concerning church societies was the formation of a foreign idea of church-membership and church-relationship. In the beginning, as we have shown, the church was simply the divine family. Therefore salvation through Christ was its sole condition of membership. "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved" (Acts 2:47, R. V.). And as the local congregation was but the concrete expression of the ideals of the general body or church, that membership in Christ which made men members of the general body, made them, by a moral and spiritual law, members of all the other members of Christ, and therefore fixed their local relationship: they belonged by divine right with whichever company of believers they happened to

be associated. Nothing more than simple recognition of what God had done for them and the according to them of the local rights and privileges that naturally belonged to them was necessary on the part of a local congregation to make the actual union complete.

The wrong conception of the constitution of the church necessarily required another standard of church-membership. When *church* came to signify merely a group of congregations consolidated under a centralized human headship possessing administrative, legislative, and judicial functions (so organized as to distinguish it from all other organized groups or congregations), simple membership in Christ was insufficient to mark the convert with the stamp of denominational individuality. Salvation itself made no one a member of a church fashioned according to the kingdoms of this world. Consequently another standard of membership was necessary, a standard which required acceptance of and conformity to the self-made rules and regulations of that foreign society called a church. And when these earth-born institutions became identified in the public mind with the real church of Christ and membership in them became confused with membership in the true church of God, the natural result was that millions complied, in a formal manner at least, with the conditions of the counterfeit church membership who never knew what it meant to be vitally

joined to Christ. In this we see the "evil" fruit which grew on that tree of error. The multitudes that have been by this means deceived with the thought that they were Christians, only to be lost at last, will not be known until that awful day of final reckoning.

Divisive nature of the creeds

The formation of creeds tends to create division and to perpetuate division. Cæsar's maxim illustrates their history: "Soldiers will raise money, and money will make soldiers." So creeds will make sects, and sects will make creeds. "A creed or confession of faith is an ecclesiastical document—the mind and will of some synod or council possessing authority—as a term of communion by which persons and opinions are to be tested, approbated or reprobated." The sect churches are built on their creeds, although, of course, they affirm that their creeds are built on the Bible. In this case, however, it is usually apparent to the careful observer that the Bible is that part of the foundation which is buried out of sight below the ground. The creed is the real test applied to persons, the measure by which their opinions are judged. It is the creed upon which the sect is built that gives the denominational character and distinctiveness.

It is a fact of history that the primary purpose of the historical creeds was not to unite men but to separate them. The Nicene Creed was made to exclude the Arians. The Decrees of the Council

of Trent were framed to exclude Protestants; the Westminster Confession, to exclude Arminians; and the Episcopal Articles, to exclude Catholics and Independents. To rally around a creed framed by human authority and make it the basis of union is but to teach a system—a sect system; but to rally around the person of Jesus Christ and make him the supreme object of our faith, hope, and love is to contend for what the Bible terms the faith, the truth, the gospel. This is infinitely better than any document proceeding from Nicea, Trent, Dort, Augsburg, or Westminster.

Power of the keys

Another cause, both for the origin of the sect system and its perpetuation, is the assumed "power of the keys" which has been carried over from the Church of Rome. The idea that the administrative rule and government of the church of Christ has been, by divine decree, centralized in a self-perpetuating clerical caste with authority to legislate for the church and then to enforce its decisions by judicial procedure, is foreign to the primitive church as recorded in the New Testament. It is a product of Papalism, and yet it has been, in its essential characteristics, transferred directly to the sects of Protestantism. The New Testament recognizes no such human positional authority. It recognizes only that divine authority which operates through God's chosen ministers and helpers by virtue of the Spirit-bestowed gifts and

qualifications. The only governmental authority exercised by the New Testament ministers was in cooperation with Christ, the visible head, by putting forth, in accordance with the Spirit's gifts and qualifications, some portion of that moral power by which alone Christ governs.

The idea that to a clerical order has been committed the exclusive guardianship of the church, with full power to admit to or exclude from the worship and service of God all except those who come by way of their priestly mediation, is the basest assumption. It is a violation of the rights of individual conscience. Yet just such power has been and still is being exerted as a means of enforcing acquiescence in matters of opinion and submission to customs and practises which every unprejudiced man knows, or can soon see, is no part of the New Testament teaching and requirements. What a weapon has this ecclesiastical assumption been! One always ready for use. It makes no difference whether it is wielded by a Methodist conference, an Episcopal judicatory, a Presbyterian synod, or a Catholic pope, it is all the same in principle—"the power of the keys."

Lack of religious freedom

This assumed corporate power of the clergy has been one of the fundamental causes of sect-making. When a general clerical body assumes the right in its corporate capacity to prescribe rules of either faith or practise, written or unwritten, and then to en-

force them by judicial action, it is a direct violation of the New Testament standard, and of the rights of individual consciences. It was because of this lordly, unscriptural rule that many sincere men of God have been forced to sever their connection with the older sects in order to find a place where a greater degree of light and truth could be experienced and proclaimed. In such cases it was not religious liberty that caused the formation of new movements and new sects, but *the lack of religious liberty.*

That "power of the keys," making and then enforcing the standards of creeds, has done violence to the conscience of both the clergy and the laity. Conscienceless persons subscribe to the creed without any particular hesitation, but the truly conscientious suffer the greatest embarrassment. They must either refuse altogether and withdraw from all connection, or else subscribe with a mental reservation amounting practically to hypocrisy.

Inflexible character

This inflexible character of the sect institution has been a most fruitful cause for the production of new sects. No matter how spiritual the movement at its beginning, when its leaders were not longing for church power but were earnestly preaching the Word of the Lord as it came unto them, as soon as the sect machinery was thoroughly organized and was set in motion the inevitable tendency has been to

throw around the movement a wall of creedal and ecclesiastical exclusiveness which shut out other true people of God; and then began a process of crystalization which ever afterwards precluded the unfolding of new truth. It is a well-known fact that the high tide of truth-discovery in every religious movement in Protestantism has been at the time of its beginning. A fixed law of immobility has ever afterwards prevailed. The reason is clear: whenever men grasp the reins of government and assume those prerogatives which belong to God alone, the rule of the Spirit ends. The unfolding of new truths by the operation of the Spirit is impossible within the limits of the old order where human ecclesiasticism reigns. But truth can not be permanently suppressed. If it can not find room for development within the existing order of things, God will raise up men who will, independently, proclaim the Word of the Lord. This he has done repeatedly, only to have the new movements end in the same manner—in a rule of human ecclesiasticism.

Human ecclesiasticism has always been the greatest barrier to the free spiritual development of the work of Christ. According to that relic of the papal church, authority and rule is vested in the clerical corporation and is by them conferred upon other individuals by the act of ordination. How different the standard of the Word! In the Old Testament times the office of prophet did not

come in the priestly line, but on whomsoever the spirit of prophecy descended — whether upon Amos, the herdsman, or David, the king—he spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. There has never been a time under the divine economy when any man to whom the Word of the Lord came was not divinely authorized to proclaim his message wherever he could get a hearing, whether in synagog or temple, or out under the broad canopy of heaven.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

What about the church of the future? Is the modern sect system the ultimate goal of Christian attainment in this world? While the sects contain much truth and many of the people of God, their ecclesiastical constitutions are foreign to the true church of Jesus Christ, and it is inconceivable that the great Founder would make no provision either in his Word or in his plan for the correction of the evils which have grown up around the Christian system during the dark ages of the world and which have in a great measure perverted the gospel itself and lessened its wholesome efficiency as the universal remedy for human ills.

Since no sect can make good a claim to being exclusively the church of God, a general feeling of toleration at least (if not in all cases of sincere respect) has come to prevail respecting the different denominational churches. Men have come to look upon the sects as a mere matter of fact, not to be seriously questioned, and we are supposed to cover the whole scene with the mantle of patience and charity and make the best of a bad situation.

Dr. J. M. Sturtevant has expressed this general attitude so well that I shall quote his own words: "It has long been true in this country that no Protestant can freely expose the errors and super-

stitions of the papal church, especially from the pulpit, without incurring the charge of intolerance, bigotry, and uncharitableness. Religious controversy itself has been placed under the ban, as in its own nature uncharitable. When once any religious opinion has organized itself into a sect, it is thought to have acquired a sacredness which, in the name of Christian charity and in the interest of the tranquility of the community, defends it from any open assault. We have come into the condition in which Rome was when she had extended her conquests from the British Isles to the Euphrates and had transferred to Rome the divinities of all the countries conquered. People of every nationality might worship their own divinities, but must respectfully tolerate the worship of every other. In this way only could religious conflict be avoided. The chief reason why Christianity was persecuted was that from its very nature it could accept no such truce. It is either a universal religion or no religion at all. It is, like all other systems which claim to be the true, in its own nature exclusive."

The Protestant truce

It is because of its universal character that truth can accept no such truce as has been declared by the modern sects. Truth is exclusive, and hence can make no compromises. The church of God is universal or it is no church at all. The whole truth concerning the church question must and will come out. The times demand it; the people of

God demand it; the Spirit of God demands it; and, as we shall show, the Scriptures declare it.

A new awakening

It is very evident that the people of God are not satisfied with the present sectarian situation. Everywhere there is manifested a restlessness and uneasiness respecting the arbitrary lines of sect which separate between those who have a recognized spiritual affinity—recognized except formally by the ecclesiastical powers that be. *The Christian consciousness is becoming awakened.* Men are coming to see that Christianity is to be measured, not by sect lines, but by that broader, Scriptural rule of the divine family embracing all true disciples of Jesus —those who possess his life and bear the appropriate fruits of righteousness. This awakening, with its logical consequences, is what I have termed THE LAST REFORMATION. It will give form and character to the Church of the Future.

Apologies for sects

Sectarianism still has its defenders, however. In the midst of the rising tide of spiritual fellowship and love, there are those who bring forward a few sickly apologies for sects, apologies which generally impress the earnest student of the Scriptures with the thought that the apologist has a hard case to make out. The excuse most commonly advanced is that the sect system is a useful arrangement for accommodating the variety of tastes and feelings found among Christian people. It is assumed

that some are natural-born Episcopalians, with an innate fondness for formal liturgies and ecclesiastical vestments, and that others are so constituted by nature as to require certain other particular forms of worship.

Diversity of taste and culture

If there is any such fundamental demand in human nature for a variety of sects, as different climates are required to suit different orders of life on our planet, it is strange indeed that the apostles overlooked such an important point and failed to provide for it. Why was not the primitive church constructed so as to bring into existence at once a variety of human sects to accommodate the different classes of people then existing? From the modern point of view they had an excellent excuse for starting with at least two churches—one for the Jews and another for the Gentiles; and if these had not been sufficient, before the end of their personal ministry they could have brought into existence a whole brood of sects.

Now, the student of the Scriptures knows that the apostles proceeded exactly in the opposite direction. They labored earnestly to bring all classes into love and fellowship *in one body*. This course was not in accordance with the wisdom of the world, but the twentieth century is beginning to see that it was "the wisdom of God."

The reason why men have a liking for formal liturgies, stately ceremonies, and ecclesiastical

vestments is because of environment. They have been trained that way. Here again we see the natural tendency of sects to make sectarians and thus reproduce their kind. When particular forms and ceremonies, which are not required by Scripture, are enforced upon men by a self-constituted, self-perpetuating ecclesiastical authority, the inevitable result is to stamp the same principles upon succeeding generations and thus perpetuate the sect system exercising such authority.

The sect spirit

In a final effort to lessen the odium attaching to what is now widely recognized as an evil, some assert that the cause of mischief is the sect spirit. This statement contains truth, but it does not tell the whole truth. One of the worst evils of human slavery was the extreme tyranny which some slave-masters exercised. But the real fact was that the system itself tended to convert good men and women into tyrants. The special manifestation of evil was both effect and cause. It was the natural tendency of the system to make tyrants, and tyrants perpetuated the system. So also with sectarianism. Though all can realize a theoretical difference between the sect spirit and simple denominationalism, yet the very tendency of the system itself is to create party interests and to introduce party rivalries, which naturally foster the sect spirit. Without that devotion to party and party interests —a devotion almost equal to their devotion to the

gospel itself—sects would perish. *If sect-members should become so universal in their love and sympathy as to devote themselves to the work of Christ alone—forgetting party interests—sects would die. The sect spirit is, therefore, essential to the maintenance of the life and individuality of the sect body.*

What is the remedy?

The remedy for sectarianism is not a return to imperialism. The world-church idea as exemplified in the papal church is not the goal of Christianity. Such might hold dominion over men in the barbaric ages of the world, but its universal sway has ceased. The Inquisition will never be reestablished. The unity of the church is not to be found in an imperial hierarchy.

Nor is Christian unity to be obtained by adherence to the historic creeds. These documents may express many noble sentiments respecting Christ and his truth, and they may express the fullest knowledge of the truth known in the days when they were written. But knowledge of the truth is progressive, while creeds are stationary. No human document, therefore, can serve as a permanent basis upon which to build our faith. And then, too, we have seen that creeds are in their very nature divisive. Hence they can not be made the basis for the realization of unity.

Nor is the unity of the church to be found in some particular form of exclusive church polity,

as Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, or Congregationalism. We have conclusively proved that that conception of the church patterned after the forms of political government, in which government and authority are vested inherently and exclusively in human hands, is foreign to the original conception of the church as it existed in the minds of its Founder and his apostles. The government of the New Testament church is a theocracy. Christ is head. He rules through his Holy Spirit by moral suasion and spiritual influence, and the ministers and helpers whom he calls and qualifies share in that oversight and responsibility to the same extent that they are able to wield the same moral and spiritual power. *This is the only church authority and government recognized in the New Testament.*

The perpetual theocracy

Here I shall digress long enough to point out by way of contrast the true form of divine government. Every one is familiar with the theocratic government of Israel under the Old Testament dispensation. God ruled. He who carefully reads the New Testament can not fail to discern the same type of government in the church before the rise of human ecclesiasticism. The first preachers of the gospel spoke with an authority not derived from a human source. When Peter and John were threatened before the Council and commanded not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus Christ, they gave the

sublime answer: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we can not but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19, 20). The same principle stands out in bold relief in the experience of Paul. Although that great apostle was forward to cooperate with other apostles and ministers of Christ, one can not fail to see that his whole career exemplified the principle of theocracy. He "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

An important parallelism

Permit me to call attention particularly to an important parallelism between the government of Israel under the theocracy and the government of the New Testament church before the rise of ecclesiasticism. God led his people out of Egypt by Moses and Joshua. These men are a type of Christ, who leads his people. After the Israelites were settled in Canaan, they had no central government, but each locality or city was autonomous, having its local judges or elders. In a time of crisis God raised up a judge to lead the people in the necessary cooperative efforts to preserve or regain their liberties. Their miseries were always the result of their own sins, not a failure of the divine form of government. Their appointing a king and thus setting up a centralized human government was called *rejecting God as ruler*. And this is exactly parallel with what ecclesiasticism has done and is

doing with the same results. God's government of the church is set aside and rejected.

Nor will an organic union of all the sects solve the problem of unity. In the first place, the tendency of such a union is toward imperialism, the creation on the federation plan of another world-church. In the second place, such a federation would strengthen rather than lessen the authority of human rule, while the compromises necessary to make such a project possible would lessen in the same degree that freedom of the Spirit by which alone the full gospel can be given to the world. And in the third place, such a federation would not be the church of God, for the very framework on which it would rest, human ecclesiasticism, is foreign to the original conception of the church. It would be only a human arrangement patterned after the model of a world-empire. And for another reason such would not be the church. The divine *ekklesia* includes in its membership the whole family of God. Thousands of men and women who are united to Christ and in fellowship with all the saved are not members of the formally organized sects. Therefore the union of all such churches in one federation would not include the whole family.

Not church federation

Thus, the remedy for sects is not church federation, nor a return to the historic creeds, nor the adoption of one of the exclusive forms of church polity; neither is it an attempt to hide the sin of

the obnoxious sect system by covering it with a mantle of charity and patience—as a sort of necessary evil. What, then, is the real remedy for sects? It is the absolute rejection of every foreign element that has crept into the Christian system and the return to that primitive conception of the church as made up of the entire brotherhood of Christ, organized and controlled by the Holy Spirit. For true unity we must turn from hierarchies and apostolical successions and priestly corporations and church synods and human creeds to THE CHRIST who alone is the head of the church.

Back to the Bible standard

Such a movement requires a moral revolution with respect to the attitude of God's people toward membership in sects. It requires the obliteration of sect lines and the recognition of no other bond of union than that of a common brotherhood through union with Christ. Divine life secured through repentance and faith is the sole condition of membership in the church of Christ, and this relationship is maintained by obedience to the commands of Christ and consistent Christian conduct. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

True membership

Such a movement and such a standard of church relationship require the elimination of all ideas of

priestly ecclesiasticism. The Christ of the New Testament church is not an absent Christ. He has never resigned his position as head of the church and vested the governmental authority in a self-perpetuating clerical caste. His government is theocratic. He administers it himself through his Holy Spirit. Hence no men or set of men can confer any power or authority whatsoever upon any individual to act for Christ. Christ calls his own assistants, and any man unto whom the Word of the Lord comes is divinely authorized to proclaim His message. The only sphere of human operation respecting this administration of divine government is simple recognition of what God has done, and this recognition in the last analysis belongs to the whole body of God's people. The basis of every man's authority and responsibility is, therefore, not human appointment or official position, but the divine call, gifts, and qualifications, that he possesses. If, for example, he is called to apostolic work and endowed with gifts and qualifications fitting him for such service, he has apostolic authority and responsibility, and there is nothing for other ministers or Christians to do but to *recognize what God has done.* "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 12:18). Such, in short, is the divine organization and government.

Elimination of ecclesiasticism

The realization of this grand ideal of the restora-

tion of the New Testament standard of church membership, government, and authority, is impossible within the sect system. For the sects to turn all the people of God loose from subjection to every foreign yoke and make them free to associate without restriction with all the saved of God, would be an act of suicide. *Only by division and by holding the grasp of ecclesiastical rule can sects survive.* But he is blind to the signs of the times who can not see that the grip of ecclesiasticism is slipping and the bonds of true catholicity becoming strengthened. The true people of God are becoming more and more dissatisfied with present conditions and are beginning to think in terms of a universal Christianity. The rising tide of evangelism among such is already beginning to overflow the lines of sect. What may we expect in the future?

What of the future?

Things can not continue as they have been in the ecclesiastical world. A sweeping reformation is imperative and imminent. In fact, the vanguard of this great movement is already visible. What will the future bring forth? Will the sects themselves fade away and gradually become dissolved? or will the powers that rule in the ecclesiastical world finally set themselves against the spirit of catholicity and thus practically force the true people of God to ignore absolutely all sectarian lines and step out on the broad platform of truth and universality, united in Christ alone, knowing no

head but Christ and no creed but his truth? Who can tell?

In the present work I have given a brief historical sketch of the leading ecclesiastical events, showing the apostasy as it existed under two phases, the corruption of evangelical faith and the reign of ecclesiasticism. I have also shown that the reformations of Protestantism have tended to the correction of that first phase pertaining to doctrine, but that a complete reformation requires the elimination of ecclesiasticism. Hence what I have termed the Last Reformation, if it is to be the *last,* not only must include the restoration of pure doctrinal truth but must also restore the real church of the New Testament. So far as true doctrine is concerned, such a reformation will differ from other evangelical movements in degree only—it must ultimately comprehend the whole truth. But the fundamental difference between the reformation herein considered and all other preceding reformations is that it strikes the death-blow to the very root of error that produced the sect system—*human ecclesiasticism*—and substitutes therefor the administrative authority of the Holy Spirit working in varying degrees in all the members of Christ throughout the world. The last reformation therefore must differ from all others, not in degree only, but *also in kind.*

A fundamental difference

God alone understands the future. During the

ages past he has not left his own work without the witness of prophecy. We may rest assured, therefore, that in the prophecy of the divine Word he has given us an outline of the history of his church. So I shall ask the reader to patiently follow me through a brief sketch of ecclesiastical events as described in the prophecies of the Revelation. Such an examination will throw a large amount of additional light on the subjects I have already treated historically, and will also give us a divinely drawn picture of the church of the future. Such will enable us to understand better the real character and extent of THE LAST REFORMATION.

The witness of prophecy

PART III
The Church in Prophecy

CHAPTER X

INTERPRETATION OF PROPHETIC SYMBOLS

Value of prophecy

The value of prophecy in establishing the religion of the Bible as the religion of God has been generally recognized. Its value, however, is not limited to the proof of the divinity of Biblical truth which it furnishes: it serves a definite and most important purpose in the life and work of God's believing children in all ages. By it we are better able to understand God's own plan and purposes in human history, and by it we are made conscious of our own whereabouts along the pathway of time. The movements of God in the history of the past that were predicted by earlier prophets have received their chief inspiration from the conscious knowledge the leaders had of the prophetic character of their work. It was Daniel's study of prophecy that stirred his soul for the restoration of Israel to the favor of God and to their own land (Dan. 9:2), and at the same time opened his own heart for the wonderful revelation concerning future events. It was the consciousness of prophetic fulfilment that gave John the Baptist his inspiration for work (John 1:23); and in establishing the truths of the gospel of Christ, the apostles placed leading emphasis on the fact that these things were written in the law and in the prophets.

The love and care that Christ had for his people did not cease in the beginning of the gospel dispensation; for he gave the promise, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It is altogether reasonable, then, that we should receive "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to *show unto his servants* things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1). Through the varying conditions of time, Christ leads his people on to certain victory.

Since the mission of the church was to be world-wide and perpetual, it is fitting that the church should be described prophetically in order that we might have definite information concerning the operations of the divine hand in working out the great problem of the church's destiny after the close of the sacred canon.

Prophetic symbols

Before proceeding with our discussion of those prophecies which concern the church, let us pause and consider briefly the character of symbols. The prophecy of the Scriptures is presented to us in two distinct forms —direct statements in the ordinary language of life and in symbolic representations, but far the greater part is expressed in symbols, as in the book of Daniel and in the Revelation of John. Without an understanding of the nature of symbols we can not get a proper understanding of such prophecies.

Spoken or written language is a very compli-

cated affair, but it is in reality an arbitrary arrangement. The name that we attach to a particular object could as well be given to a totally different object instead if we only agreed to make the change. For this reason spoken language is variable. Changes are constantly taking place. The language of Bible symbols, on the other hand, is not subject to the law of change, as we shall see; it is not based on arbitrary arrangement or mere convenience, but its foundational principles exist in the very nature of things.

Webster defines *symbol* as follows: "The sign or representation of any moral thing by the images or properties of natural things. Thus, a lion is the symbol of courage; the lamb is the symbol of meekness or patience." Horne, in his Introduction to the Study of the Bible, says: "By symbols we mean certain representative marks, rather than express pictures; or, if pictures, such as were at the time *characters,* and besides presenting to the eye the resemblance of a particular object, suggested a general idea to the mind, as when a *horn* was made to denote *strength,* an *eye* and *scepter, majesty,* and in numberless such instances, where the picture was not drawn to express merely the thing itself, but something else, which was or was conceived to be, analogous to it."

According to these definitions, the main idea of a symbol is the representation of an object or quality, not by exhibition of itself, but by another ob-

ject or character analogous to it. Nor are we limited in the use of symbols to the exhibition of moral subjects alone. Any object may be symbolized, provided a corresponding object can be found.

Analogy, then, is the fundamental law of symbols. This being true, it is clear that symbols must be definitely applied. They are not arbitrary. There is no reason why we could not call a book a table, and a table it would be, provided we agreed universally to adopt that designation; but we violate nature if we attempt to represent the quiet, peaceful, gentle disposition of a child by a lion or a tiger, or a cruel, vindictive, tyrannical disposition by a lamb. A polluted harlot may represent an apostate church, but not the true church. A proper correspondence of character and quality must be observed. We must follow nature strictly. And this is the law of symbols.

Analogy the basic law

Symbols are drawn from different departments —from angelic life, human life, animal life, and inanimate creation. But in every case there is in the selection and use of the symbol a proper correspondence of character and quality.

The deciding factor in the original selection of a symbolic object is the nature of the thing to be symbolized. In the field of Bible prophecy the general design is in the main twofold—the representation (1) of the affairs of the church and (2) of the political his-

Twofold object of symbols

tory of those nations and kingdoms which were to exert an important influence on the life and development of the church. It is evident that in the divine estimation the church and its welfare is of infinitely greater importance than the affairs of nations and kingdoms. Therefore we may reasonably expect that, according to the nature of symbolic language, symbols designed to represent the church will be found to be of the most exalted type, whereas those representing political things will be found to be selected from an inferior department. In accordance with this fundamental classification we shall find that symbols drawn from angelic life and human life invariably refer to the department of ecclesiastical affairs, while those drawn from animal life or inanimate nature represent political things. The only apparent exception to this rule is that certain inanimate objects formerly consecrated to the service of God and thus associated with the department of the church are sometimes used to represent spiritual things, because the analogy is obvious. Bearing in mind this fundamental distinction between the representation of things political and things ecclesiastical, we are prepared to understand other shades of distinction.

Nations may be peaceful or tyrannical and oppressive, and churches may be good or apostate; but the exact character can be analogously represented by the symbolic object. A vicious wild

beast stamping and devouring would naturally represent a cruel, tyrannical government; and a good woman represents the true church, while a vile harlot represents the church apostate. But whatever the nature of the symbol, whether beast, locust, lion, horse, temple, angel, or man, we may know at once from the nature of the symbol where to look for its fulfilment. This important guide in the study of prophetic truth—a guide overlooked by most of the commentators—relieves us of much of the uncertainty hitherto connected with the subject.

Since, as we have seen, symbolic language is based on analogy, it is evident that there are some objects whose nature forbids their symbolization, there being no corresponding object in existence. God can not be symbolized. "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him" (Isa. 40:18). There may be certain symbols connected with his person setting forth the dignity, majesty, and eternal splendor of his name, but he himself appears unrepresented by another. The same is true also of the person of Jesus, our Redeemer, although in this case we must distinguish between the Christ incarnate and Jesus in his essential divinity. Considered as incarnate—both God and man—the human aspect of his character as manifested in his sacrificial death may be analogously represented as a Lamb slain. But considered in his essential divinity, he

can not be symbolically represented. Therefore, whenever the glorified Christ appears on the symbolic stage, he always appears in his own person proclaiming his own name. "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18). "He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords."

In Rev. 6:9 the souls of the martyrs are represented as crying unto God for the avenging of their blood on them that dwell on the earth. There is no object analogous to a disembodied spirit. It is easy to give them an arbitrary name. Therefore they simply appear under their own appropriate titles as "the *souls* of them that were slain."

Whenever we attach a literal significance to a symbolic object, we immediately destroy its character as a symbol. This should not be done. With the exception of those instances where the nature of an object forbids its symbolization and where the description must therefore of necessity be literal, we should always look for the true fulfilment, not in that department from which the symbol is drawn, but in another department—that to which the symbol by analogy refers us.

The limits and object of the present work preclude an exhaustive treatment of prophecy in general. Our immediate purpose is to set forth particularly those prophecies of the divine Word which clearly portray and outline the character

of a world-wide religious movement in the last days. To do this effectually, however, we must briefly consider those prophecies which describe the principal ecclesiastical events in history which form the basis of, or lead up to, the Last Reformation. The subject as outlined in the prophecies and as based on the facts of history, naturally divides into four parts, or epochs, as follows:

Field of present inquiry

I The Apostolic Period
II The Medieval Period
III Era of Modern Sects
IV The Last Reformation

For the sake of brevity, we shall, as far as possible, exclude from our present inquiry those prophecies pertaining to civil and political affairs, retaining only such as have an important bearing on the church subject.

CHAPTER XI

THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD

The twelfth chapter of Revelation introduces an important line of prophetic truth respecting the church, beginning with these words: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (verses 1, 2, 5, 6).

The star-crowned woman

As we have already stated and as will be made very clear hereafter, symbols drawn from human life are used to represent ecclesiastical affairs. Therefore in the symbol now before us we have a representation of the church, and from the general description given we infer that it must be the pure church of God, for the brightest luminaries of heaven are gathered around her and no evil thing is said concerning her. That this woman is the special object of God's care and concern is further shown by the fact that when she fled into

the wilderness, she had "a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there." That this interpretation of the woman is correct is also shown by other texts in Revelation.

In chapter 21:9 an angel talking with John said, "Come hither, I will shew thee the *bride,* the Lamb's wife." And again, in chapter 19:7, where the church is undoubtedly referred to, a great multitude is represented as saying, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his *wife* hath made herself ready." In the seventeenth chapter the church apostate is without doubt described by the symbol of a vile, polluted harlot.

The pure woman of chapter 12, then, represents the apostolic church in all its beauty and glory. She is represented as clothed with the sun, a striking emblem of the light of the glorious gospel of Christ which shone forth from the early church. The moon under her feet is generally understood to designate the typical worship of the Jewish age, which was a shadow of things to come but which now stands eclipsed in the superior light and glory of the new and better dispensation. The moon is the lesser light and derives its illumination from the sun; so also the Mosaic period was the moonlight age of the church and reflected a part of the gospel which, at a later time, was to be revealed in all its glory with the rise of the "Sun of righteousness."

The crown of twelve stars adorning the diadem of the church is a fit representation of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, they being in one important sense permanent fixtures in the church. According to chapter 1:20, stars are sometimes used to represent Christian ministers, the analogy as light-givers being obvious. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

The prominent position occupied by this woman and the light which shone forth from the sun with which she was clothed stand out in marked contrast with the later description given of her flight into and seclusion in the wilderness. The latter stage of her experience I shall describe further on, but a brief allusion to it will make her first appearance more impressive. The wilderness describes the apostasy which was to envelop the woman and thus obscure her light. Therefore her first appearance as in the planetary heavens presents a sublime description of her dignity and excellence in the morning time of the gospel era. Her light shone upon all and her glory could be seen by all. She presents that fundamentally distinct characteristic of the true church of God—universality; not a mere isolated star shedding its feeble rays in competition with the other orbs of night; but a cluster of bright, shining stars and *the very sun itself*. The light of the apostolic church was,

therefore, all-inclusive in the sense of reflecting all the truth. It is essential to our proper understanding of the symbols that follow that we comprehend the true character of the church of God —the bride of Christ.

The next object to claim our attention in the vision under consideration is that of the man child to whom the woman is said to give birth. A variety of interpretations of this man child have been given. Some say that it refers to Jesus Christ, but this application is objectionable for different reasons. First, Jesus is everywhere represented as the founder of the church, not as its child. Second, true analogy is lacking: there is nothing about a mere child to proclaim divinity. Others have identified the child with the Emperor Constantine; but here again the consistent use of symbolic language is overlooked; for if the woman, the mother, represents the church, then the child born of her can not represent a single, definite individual, but rather a collection of individuals or another phase of the church itself. In other words, if the one single symbol represents a particular individual, the other must also represent an individual. Thus, if the man child is identified with Christ, the mother should signify the Virgin Mary; or if Constantine is intended, then Helena, mother of Constantine, should be represented by the woman.

The man child

It is clear, however, that the woman signifies,

not a single individual, but the church. Therefore the child born of her must simply signify another phase of the church but the same family. By means of this twofold symbol—involving the closest relationship known—is set forth the fruitfulness and perpetuity of the church. There is also another reason why a double symbol should be selected to set forth the true church—to represent two distinct phases of the church's life and history, which, in the nature of the case, could not be represented under a single symbol. According to the description given, the man child was caught up to God and to his throne, while the woman remained on earth and fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God for 1,260 days. The man child, then, represents that phase of the church which was caught up from the earth but ascended to heaven and there lived and reigned with Christ; while the woman represents that phase of the church which continued on earth and fled into the wilderness during the period of the great apostasy.

There is also direct Scriptural testimony justifying this interpretation of the man child. In Isaiah 66 we have a sublime description of Zion, God's church and people, represented as a woman, a mother. The context shows that this scripture is a prophetic allusion to the church of the New Testament age. "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of

a *man child.* Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (verses 7, 8). Here Zion is represented as a mother bringing forth a man child, but this is interpreted to be *a nation born at once.* According to Heb. 12:22, 23, this Zion, or Sion, represents the New Testament church. There is no doubt, then, that the man child of Revelation 12 refers to the great host of new converts with which the early church was blessed. The scripture in Isaiah just cited met its fulfilment on the day of Pentecost and shortly afterwards, when thousands were brought into the church in a day. The apostle Paul also refers to the great company of Jews and Gentiles who were reconciled to God as constituting *"one new man" in Christ* (Eph. 2:15).

The great red dragon

The next object in the vision to which our attention is directed is introduced in these words: "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born" (Rev. 12:3, 4).

The dragon is the name given by the ancients to a fabulous monster represented as a large winged lizard or serpent. It was regarded as the enemy of mankind, and its overthrow is made to figure among the greatest exploits of the gods and heroes of heathen mythology. The symbol, being drawn from the natural world, directs us by analogy to persecuting, tyrannical government. We must not suppose that this is a literal description of Beelzebub; for there is no proof that the personal devil has any such appearance as this monster with seven heads and ten horns, and a tail dragging after him a third part of the stars of heaven.

In the second verse of the next chapter John describes the rise of a beast that also had seven heads and ten horns; "and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." The fact that the dragon was succeeded by the beast, who reigned in his stead, is proof that the dragon does not signify the personal devil; for, as far as we know, the archfiend has never resigned his position, but is still doing his infernal business at the same stand.

In many respects the beast is similar to the dragon. In the seventeenth chapter the beast appears again, and the explanation given by the angel will enable us to understand the signification both of the dragon and of the beast. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall

ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition . . . and here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. . . . And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (verses 8-12).

With these facts before us and with our understanding of the nature of symbols, it is easy to identify the dragon and the beast as the Roman Empire, first under the pagan form and later under the papal form. Although the beast was to succeed the dragon, yet in identifying the heads of the beast, the angel informed John that in his day five had already fallen, while one then existed and the other was future. This proves, then, that the same heads served both for the dragon and for the beast, thus establishing their essential identity. And it is a fact well known that there is no essential difference between Rome pagan and Rome papal. The seven heads of Rome, therefore, signify the distinct forms of government that ruled successively in the empire, for they are represented, not as simultaneous powers, but as consecutive powers. The five that had already fallen when John received the vision were the regal power, the consular, the decemvirate, the military

tribunes, and the triumvirate. "One is"—the imperial. The seventh, or future one, was the patriciate.

It is natural that the pagan Roman Empire should be represented as a dragon. In the prophecy of Daniel the Grecian kingdom is represented by a he goat for no other apparent reason than the fact that the goat was the national military standard of the Grecian monarchy. So also the dragon was the principal military standard of the Romans next to the eagle. Arian, an early writer, mentions the fact that dragons were used as military standards by the Romans. The dragon of Revelation 12 is also described as a *red* dragon. The dragon standards of the Romans were painted red. Ammianus Marcellinus mentions "the purple standard of the dragon." By this fabulous beast described as a great red dragon, then, is symbolically represented the heathen Roman Empire.

The ten horns, or kingdoms, which had not yet risen when the revelation was given, were the ten minor kingdoms that grew out of the Roman Empire during its decline and fall. These are as follows: 1. Anglo-Saxons; 2. Burgundians; 3. Franks; 4. Huns; 5. Heruli; 6. Lombards; 7. Ostrogoths; 8. Suevi; 9. Vandals; 10. Visigoths.

The dragon is described with the horns, although they were not yet in existence and did not arise until about the time the dragon became the beast.

He is also represented with seven heads, although he really possessed only one head at a time and five had already fallen and one was yet to come. He is described with all the heads and horns he had ever had or was to have. The reason why the same general power is described under two forms —first as the dragon and later as the beast—will appear more clearly hereafter.

The fact that the dragon was called the devil and Satan has led some to think that the personal devil himself is meant. The foregoing explanation concerning the heads and the horns shows conclusively, however, that by the dragon is meant the pagan Roman Empire, and not Beelzebub. The Hebrews applied the term "Satan" to an adversary, or opposer, as can be seen by examining in the original the following and many other texts: Num. 22:22; 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kings 11:25. The term is also thus used in the New Testament, signifying merely an opposer. "But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, *Satan*" (Matt. 16:23). "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to *devils*" (1 Cor. 10:20). Paganism was the great opposer of Christianity; hence was a Satan to it, while the apostle Paul denominated its religious rites as devil-worship. We must remember that the text does not say that the dragon was the devil and Satan, but that he was *called* the devil and Satan. He partook of the nature and character of the per

sonal devil, was the chief instrument through which the devil worked, and was therefore called by his name.

The tail of this dragon "drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." This is not a literal description, for the fixed or planetary stars never fall to the earth. If they did, they would destroy it. The stars are doubtless employed as symbols set in the ecclesiastical firmament, giving light amid the surrounding darkness. Light is so often used as the representative of gospel truth that the application of the stars to prominent characters in the church is obvious. Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness, and his ministers are bright, shining stars—light-givers. The ministers of the seven churches of Asia Minor are represented as stars (chap. 1:20). "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). The casting down of the third part of the stars, therefore, signifies the warfare which the dragon power waged against the early church, in which conflict the ministers of Christ became the marked objects of heathen wrath.

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent

called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The war in heaven

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death'' (Rev. 12:7-11).

The symbolic scene suddenly changes, and instead of the woman and the man child, Michael and his angels appear in conflict with the dragon and his angels. This change of symbols indicates the introduction of a different phase of thought. From the nature of the symbols we can quickly ascertain the reason for this change. The woman represents the true church and is a proper symbol of its unity, beauty, purity, and glory. But there is another phase of the church which can not be represented symbolically by a woman—the militant phase. The church is also an aggressive, fighting power, ready to wage warfare against the powers of evil. We would not expect to see the church left helpless like a woman before a great dragon. We would naturally expect to see divine aid extended, and this is done by the change of symbolic imagery, Michael (Christ) and his

angels appearing to wage war against the dragon.

The battle between Michael and the dragon signifies the great conflict which took place between primitive Christianity and the powers of paganism enthroned in the Roman Empire. It will be observed that this scripture has no reference to the origin of Satan himself, as some people have supposed; for the conflict was fought in the Christion dispensation, as is proved by the weapons which the followers of Michael employed—"And they *overcame him by the blood of the Lamb,* and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." Under this figure, the followers of Michael are represented as victors, the dragon being cast down to the earth, or overthrown. It is a fact of history that primitive Christianity succeeded in its fight against paganism.

In the nineteenth chapter of Acts we have an account of the effect Christianity had on heathenism. Paul went to Ephesus, which at that time was the chief capital of proconsular Asia, a leading mart of heathen idolatry, and in which was situated one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—the temple of Diana. The preaching of the gospel produced such a mighty effect that the followers of Diana, fearing lest their magnificent system of worship should be destroyed, stirred up the people in a tumult until the city was in an up-

roar, a great mob shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

Before the end of the first century, according to the testimony of the younger Pliny, the temples of the gods of Asia Minor were almost forsaken. Well has Butler said, "The final victory of Christianity over heathenism and Judaism, and the mightiest empire of the ancient world, a victory gained without physical force, by the moral power of faith and perseverance, of faith and love, is one of the strongest evidences of the divinity and indestructible life of our holy religion."

It is a fact worthy of mention that the early Christians regarded the Roman Empire as a great enemy to the truth, and described it as a dragon, the victory of Christianity over heathenism being represented by the overthrow of the dragon. Constantine and others of his time describe these events thus. Says Bishop Newton, "Moreover, a picture of Constantine was set up over the palace gate, with a cross over his head, and under his feet the great enemy of mankind (who persecuted the church by means of impious tyrants), in the form of a dragon, transfixed with a dart through the midst of its body, and falling headlong into the depth of the sea."

Verse 11 seems to indicate that many of the followers of Christ lost their lives in this conflict, and this doubtless is parallel with the statement that the man child was caught up to God and to his

throne. It may also imply that in the conflict the dragon employed the arm of civil power in his opposition to the truth. But Christianity increased notwithstanding the violent opposition. During the reign of the Emperor Septimus Severus, about the close of the second century, when a violent persecution of the Christians occurred, Tertullian, the first of the great Latin Fathers, wrote a notable apology for the Christian faith, addressed to the Emperor. In this important document this noble defender of Christianity sets forth so clearly the nature of the conflict between truth and error that I shall make rather a lengthy quotation from his writing.

"Rulers of the Roman Empire," he begins, "you surely can not forbid the truth to reach you by the secret pathway of a noiseless book. She knows that she is but a sojourner on the earth, and as a stranger finds enemies; and more, her origin, her dwelling-place, her hope, her rewards, her honors, are above. One thing, meanwhile, she anxiously desires of earthly rulers—not to be condemned unknown. What harm can it do to give her a hearing? . . . The outcry is that the state is filled with Christians; that they are in the fields, in the citadels, in the islands. The lament is, as for some calamity, that both sexes, every age and condition, even high rank, are passing over to the Christian faith.

"The outcry is a confession and an argument

for our cause; for we are a people of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you —cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum. We leave to you your temples alone. We can count your armies: our numbers in a single province will be greater. We have it in our power, without arms and without rebellion, to fight against you with the weapon of a simple divorce. We can leave you to wage your wars alone. If such a multitude should withdraw into some remote corner of the world, you would doubtless tremble at your own solitude, and ask, 'Of whom are we the governors?'

"It is a human right that every man should worship according to his own convictions . . . a forced religion is no religion at all. . . . Men say that the Christians are the cause of every public disaster. If the Tiber rises as high as the city walls, if the Nile does not rise over the fields, if the heavens give no rain, if there be an earthquake, if a famine or pestilence, straightway they cry, Away with the Christians to the lions. . . . But go zealously on, ye good governors, you will stand higher with the people if you kill us, torture us, condemn us, grind us to the dust; your injustice is the proof that we are innocent. God permits us to suffer. Your cruelty avails you nothing. . . . The oftener you mow us down, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed. What

you call our obstinacy is an instructor. For who that sees it does not inquire for what we suffer? Who that inquires does not embrace our doctrines? Who that embraces them is not ready to give his blood for the fulness of God's grace?"

The woman's flight

Under the figure of Michael and his angels, the early church is represented as victorious in casting down the powers of heathenism; but under the symbol of the woman, the church is apparently represented as defeated; for after the casting down of the dragon it is said, "To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (verse 14). This agrees with verse 6, where it is said that "the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days."

The flight of the woman into an obscure place in the wilderness presents a striking contrast with her first appearance in the planetary heavens, where she was "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." By this sudden change in the symbolic representation of the woman's position is set forth the ecclesiastical change that took place in the early part of the church's history. First she appears as the glorious bride of Christ adorned in

beauty and splendor and radiating the light of his glorious gospel. She was then "the light of the world." Later we find a great change taking place. Instead of the church representing all the truth to the world, we find the beginning of a great apostasy, which in time was to eclipse and well nigh extinguish the light and glory of primitive Christianity by substituting in its place the darkness of the apostasy born in ages of ignorance and superstition.

That such a change in the history of the true church should occur was predicted by Christ and the apostles. Jesus said, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12). Peter said, "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies" (2 Pet. 2:1). Paul said, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). To the Thessalonians who had been troubled with the report that the second coming of Christ was then near at hand, Paul said, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come *a falling away first,* and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, and showing himself that he is God. . . . For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only

he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming'' (2 Thess. 2:3-8).

The reader can scarcely consider these texts without perceiving clearly that change which came over the primitive church resulting in a transition from her glorious state of innocent beauty to the full-grown papacy—the ''mystery of iniquity.''

CHAPTER XII

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The fact of history pertaining to the true church which Paul described as a "falling away" is represented by the Revelator by the symbol of the woman fleeing into the wilderness. The other fact mentioned by Paul pertaining to the rise and development of the man of sin is represented in the visions of the Revelation as follows:

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? and there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to

The ten-horned leopard-beast

blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints'' (Rev. 13: 1-10).

From the nature of the symbol employed, we should naturally infer that a persecuting, tyrannical kingdom or empire is meant. That such an application of the term ''beast,'' when used in connection with prophetic symbols, is correct, is shown by a reference to the interpretation given concerning the fourth beast of Daniel's vision. ''The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth'' (Dan. 7: 23). We have already shown conclusively that by the dragon was meant the pagan Roman Empire, and the same heads and horns are apparently ascribed to this leopard-beast, the only difference being that the crowns—a symbol of sovereignty—have been transferred from the heads to the horns. This substantial agreement with the facts of history makes certain the identification of this beast with the revised

western Roman Empire under the papal form, the sovereignty being vested in the ten minor kingdoms until they chose to "give their power and strength unto the beast" (Rev. 17:13).

The symbol of a beast considered merely *as a beast,* could not, in the nature of the case, signify anything more than a temporal kingdom or political empire. It will be noticed, however, that this particular prophetic symbol is *more than a beast;* for, combined with his beastly nature, there are certain characteristics which unmistakably belong to the department of human life—a mouth *speaking* great things; power to magnify himself against the God of heaven, to set himself up as an object of worship, to single out the saints of God and kill them, etc. This combination of symbols from the two departments—animal life and human life—points us with absolute certainty to the political-religious system of Rome.

Every historian knows that *pagan* Rome was succeeded by *papal* Rome. The transfer is expressed thus: "And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (verse 2). The rising papacy succeeded to the power and authority formerly exercised by pagan Rome; and when the political capital was removed to Constantinople, the pope was left in possession of the ancient seat of empire and government. "The beast" therefore refers to Rome either as a political power or as an ecclesiastical power, the con-

text determining whether the political or the ecclesiastical phase is meant in a given instance. It will be observed, however, that the leading actions ascribed to this beast are derived from its human characteristics, pointing unerringly to the papacy for its fulfilment.

This beast the world admired. "And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" The expression "*worshiped* the dragon" shows that reference is made to the dragon, not as a political power, but as a religious power. This worship of the dragon by those who worshiped the beast which succeeded the dragon was fulfilled by the perpetuation under the papacy of the rites and ceremonies of paganism. Roman Catholicism is a strange amalgamation of Judaism, Christianity, and heathenism. The part derived from paganism occupies such a prominent place in Roman Catholic practise and worship that we can not fail to observe its close resemblance to, if not absolute identity with, heathenism. Just to mention a few points:

1. The high priest of the pagan religion was called Pontifex Maximus, and he claimed spiritual and temporal authority over men. The pope of Rome borrowed the title and made the same claims, even being clad in the same attire.

2. The heathen wore scapulars, medals, and

images for personal protection. Romanists wear the same things for the same purpose.

3. Pagans, by an official process called *deification,* raised men, after their death, to a dignified position and accorded them special honors and worship. Papists, by a similar process called *canonization,* exalt men after their death to the dignity of saints and then offer up prayers to them.

4. Papists' adoration of idols and images was also borrowed direct from the heathen; for all such practises were absolutely forbidden by the Mosaic law and had no place in primitive Christianity.

5. Their religious orders of monks and nuns were also in imitation of the vestal virgins of antiquity.

The beast is described as a blasphemous power. Adam Clarke has stated that "blasphemy, in Scripture, signifies *impious speaking,* when applied to God; and *injurious speaking,* when directed against our *neighbor.*" A name of blasphemy would therefore properly signify the prostitution of a sacred name to an unholy purpose. An example of this kind is given in Rev. 2:9, where we read, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagog of Satan." In this case certain wicked men blasphemed the name by calling themselves Jews, since according to Scripture 'he *only* is a

Jew who is one inwardly.' But to prostitute a sacred name to an unworthy use would be no more impious or blasphemous than would the assumption by man of those rights and prerogatives which belong to God alone. This the pope has done for ages. Among the blasphemous titles which he has assumed are these: "Lord God the Pope," "King of the World," "Holy Father," "King of kings and Lord of lords," "Vicegerent of the Son of God." For ages he has claimed infallibility, and this claim became a dogma of the church when adopted by the General Council of 1870. Further, he claims power to dispense with God's laws, to forgive sins, to release from purgatory, to damn and to save. To call the Roman Catholic Church the *holy* church of the Bible is to prostitute a sacred name to an unworthy institution. And to elevate a man to the place where "he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that *he* is God," by claiming those prerogatives which belong to God only, is most flagrant blasphemy.

A persecuting power

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (chap. 13: 7). Here we have a direct prediction of that reign of tyranny in the Dark Ages in which millions of people suffered martyrdom at the hands of papal Rome.

I am aware that many Catholics affirm that their church never persecuted, that it was the civil power that did this dread work of slaughter. We must remember, however, that the beast of Revelation 13 signifies the imperial and the ecclesiastical power in the closest union possible; for the beast appears *as one,* the two phases being represented by the combination of symbols from the two distinct departments of life—human and animal. In the seventeenth chapter we have the same distinct characteristics again set forth, but in a different combination, the beast appearing simply as a beast, thus representing the political power of Rome; while the ecclesiastical power is represented by a corrupt woman sitting on the beast and directing its course. In that description it is stated, "And I saw *the woman* drunken *with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*" (verse 6). The Romish church itself is, therefore, represented as participating in the work of martyrdom.

Does this divine prediction agree with the facts of history? It is altogether impossible to compute correctly the number of those who were in different ways put to death for opposing the corruption of the Church of Rome. A million Waldenses perished in France. Nine hundred thousand Christians were slain within thirty years after the institution of the Jesuits. The Duke of Alva boasted that he had put to death 36,000 in the

Netherlands by the hands of the common executioner. The Inquisition destroyed 150,000 within thirty years. If it be asserted that this was accomplished by the secular arm, I reply that sentence of death was pronounced upon so-called heretics by the church and that the secular power was simply a tool for carrying the barbarous sentence into execution. We can not forget that the pope applauded Charles IX of France and his infamous mother, Catherine de Medici, for their part in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and ordered a medal struck in honor of the event; that following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, when 300,000 were cruelly butchered during the reign of Louis XIV, Pope Innocent XI extolled the king by special letter, as follows: "The Catholic Church shall most assuredly record in her sacred annals *a work of such devotion toward her* and CELEBRATE YOUR NAME WITH NEVER-DYING PRAISES . . . *for this most excellent undertaking.*"

Popery has for ages claimed the right to exterminate by death those who were heretics. Numerous provincial and national councils have issued cruel and bloody laws for the extermination of the Waldenses and other so-called heretics. Besides these, at least six of their *General* Councils, the highest judicial assemblies of the Roman Church, with the popes themselves sometimes present in person, have by their decrees pronounced

the punishment of death for heresy: 1. The Second General Council of Lateran (1139) in its twenty-third canon. 2. The Third General Council of Lateran (1179), under Pope Alexander III. 3. The Fourth General Council of Lateran (1215), under Pope Innocent III. 4. The Sixteenth General Council, held at Constance in 1414. This council, with Pope Martin present in person, condemned the reformers Huss and Jerome to be burned at the stake, and then prevailed on the Emperor Sigismund to violate the safe conduct which he had given Huss and signed by his own hand and in which he had guaranteed the reformer a safe return to Bohemia; and this inhuman sentence against Huss was then carried out. 5. The Council of Sienna (1423), which was afterwards continued at Basil. 6. The Fifth General Council of Lateran (1514).

That such teachings and practises were an integral part of Romanism is easily shown. St. Aquinas, the "angelic doctor," argued that heretics might justly be killed. Cardinal Bellarmine, in a Latin work, *De Laicis,* still extant, entered into a regular argument to prove that the church has the right of punishing heretics with death and should exercise that right. Bellarmine was a nephew of one pope and a close friend and associate of others, a champion of Romanism, and a defender of its doctrines. In the work above referred to he declares that "*heretics were often*

burned BY THE CHURCH." "The Donatists, Manicheans, and Albigenses were routed and annihilated by arms."

Many timid-hearted Christians in the present age of religious toleration think that it is almost unchristianlike for us to bring up and lay to the charge of Rome such a sweeping indictment for those massacres of Christians in a barbarous age. Such it would be had Rome ever disavowed these acts or shown any signs of true repentance. The fact is that it is the boast of Catholics that "Rome never changes." Well has Charles Butler said, "It is most true that the Roman Catholics believe the doctrines of their church to be unchangeable; and that it is a tenet of their creed, that what their faith ever has been, such it was from the beginning, *such it is now, and such it ever will be.*"

In a copy of the eleventh edition of "The Faith of Our Fathers," by Cardinal Gibbons, page 95, I read: "It is a marvelous fact, worthy of record, that in the whole history of the church, from the nineteenth century to the first, no solitary example can be adduced to show that any pope or general council ever revoked a decree of faith or morals enacted by any preceding pontiff or council. Her record in the past ought to be a sufficient warrant that she will *tolerate no doctrinal variations in the future.*" So the doctrine of her inherent right to persecute and slay every one who disagrees with her, which has been enacted by popes and gen-

eral councils and carried out in the past, is still in vogue.

"And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

In our study of Revelation 12 and 13 we have observed that Rome in its twofold form—pagan and papal—is represented by the dragon and the beast respectively. This has been established so clearly as to remove well nigh all doubt concerning the identification. It will be profitable, however, to give brief consideration to certain parallel prophecies in Daniel; for in addition to covering the same ground and describing under other symbols the same general facts of history, they furnish us an infallible starting-stake, thus establishing definitely the truth of the interpretation concerning the Roman power, and giving us a solid basis from which we can proceed with logical certainty to the interpretation of other symbols in the Revelation.

The image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream

In the second chapter of Daniel we have the narrative of a dream which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had during the time of the Jewish captivity in that city. After the king awoke, he was so confused that notwithstanding the deep impression made by his nocturnal experience, he could not recall to mind the dream itself. He therefore had recourse to the Chaldeans and wise men of his

realm. They failed to make known his dream, whereupon he became furious and decreed their death. At this juncture Daniel came forward and announced that if given time he would fulfil the king's desire, and shortly afterward he appeared before the king and addressed him as follows:

"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee: and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:31-35).

The interpretation of this dream, as given by the prophet, particularly concerns and interests us. Said Daniel: "This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king." "Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men

dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold'' (verses 36-38).

At the time of this vision the Chaldean monarchy was in the height of her power and glory. Babylon, the capital city, was the chief ''pride of the Chaldees' excellency,'' containing those magnificent hanging gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Nebuchadnezzar was pointed out particularly as the head of gold in the image, but we should bear in mind that in the general language of prophecy, ''kings'' signify not merely individual monarchs but monarchies under a succession of princes of the same nation. That the real significance of the head of gold is the Babylonian Kingdom or Monarchy is shown by the fact that in the description of the other three divisions of the same image they are referred to directly as *kingdoms*. The Babylonian Kingdom came to an end with the death of Belshazzar, and the overthrow of his father Nabonadius in 538 B. C.

''And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee'' (verse 39). This is the explanation given of that part of the image represented by the breast and arms of silver. This refers to the Medo-Persian empire, which, under Cyrus the Great, captured Babylon 538 B. C. and terminated the Chaldean empire. The Persian kingdom was

in certain respects inferior to the Chaldean, just as silver is inferior to gold. It was neither as wealthy nor as prosperous, and was particularly inferior in the character of its kings, for from the death of Cyrus they are said to have been "as vile a set of men as ever disgraced human nature."

"And another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth." This refers to the Macedonian, or Greek, empire founded by Alexander the Great. After subduing Greece and reducing Egypt, Alexander penetrated into Asia, took Tyre, met and overthrew Darius the Persian at Arbela, in 331 B. C., thus terminating the Persian Empire. The Grecian Kingdom had less external magnificence than those which preceded it and was founded and maintained by force of arms; but it was more extensive than the others, including many dominions in Europe, Africa, and regions farther to the east in Asia than had before been penetrated. It was foretold that this kingdom should "bear rule over all the earth"; it was the main boast of Alexander that he had subdued the whole world.

"And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise" (verse 40). This corresponds to the "legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay," in the dream itself. The reference is to the Roman Empire,

which succeeded the Grecian. Whether or not the two legs had any special significance is not stated, but commentators frequently refer us to the two divisions into which the empire of Rome was afterwards divided—East and West. So also the ten toes of the image are often explained as signifying the ten minor kingdoms which grew out of the empire. But we should bear in mind that this is not stated either in the vision itself or in its inspired interpretation. Only four kingdoms are referred to as such. The fourth division, representing Rome (in both its strong and its weak condition), is described simply as "the kingdom," "the fourth kingdom." The Roman Kingdom was at first "as strong as iron." No other people have ever made such extensive conquests through a long period of time as did the Romans.

If Nebuchadnezzar's dream brought a man into prominence as a symbolic object, we should think that, in accordance with the nature of symbols, a religious power or powers only were intended; but the symbol is not a man, but only the *image* of a man, and that image is composed of inanimate materials, which, drawn from the department of nature, refer to something political. We therefore have political kingdoms set forth. The very fact that they are represented as appearing in the form of a man, however, may at least allude to their being political powers combined with religious systems. But the combination is not such a

one as would naturally lead us to conclude that reference is made to God's church.

The description of Nebuchadnezzar's dream represented "a stone cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces" (verse 34). The interpretation of this event is given as follows: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (verse 44).

The kingdom of God appears as the fifth universal kingdom, destined to survive and surpass all others. It is of divine origin, cut out "without hands." The other kingdoms are similar in their nature and closely connected, in the single image of a man; but the kingdom of God is altogether different and antagonistic. The prophecy refers to the establishment of the kingdom of God in the early days of Christianity; for, *be it observed,* this stone struck the image *when all its four divisions were yet standing.* Not only was the iron and the clay broken by the impact, but "the iron, the clay, *the brass, the silver, and the gold*" were "*broken to pieces* TOGETHER, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors" (verse 35).

Here is a most important fact wholly unnoticed

by those millennialists who look to the future of our day for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. If the stone has not yet struck the image, then the chief part of the prophetic description *never can be fulfilled;* for there is no sense in which the advent of the divine kingdom in this late age of the world can break in pieces the entire image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, there being no way in which it can truthfully be said that its four divisions are yet standing. All these facts were true in the days of Rome, however, when Christ appeared. The Roman Kingdom possessed all the distinguishing marks and characteristics of the preceding empires. This is true not only of their territorial possession but of their distinctive characteristics. The opulence of the Babylonians, the splendor of the Persians, the strength and discipline of the Greeks, were all merged into the Roman Empire. And more than this, these kingdoms were all idolatrous, and the religion of the Babylonians was merely absorbed in the Persian Kingdom (not destroyed); that of the Persian was perpetuated under the Greek reign; and all these found recognition in the divers forms of paganism existing under Rome. *In this sense* the image, as opposed to the divine kingdom of Christ, was all standing at the time of the first advent of the Messiah, and the overthrow of paganism by early Christianity corresponds with the stroke given by the little stone of Daniel 2.

Notice how this fulfilment is parallel with the prophecies of the Revelation. In chapter 12 the Roman Empire under its pagan form is represented by the dragon. Christianity waged warfare with this huge system of false religion and overthrew it. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, *Now* is come salvation, and strength, *and the kingdom of our God,* and the power of his Christ" (chap. 12:10).

The kingdom represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream came in the day of incarnation and soon smote the kingdoms of heathen darkness as existing in the embrace of Rome, and broke them in pieces. It was then in the stage represented by a *stone.* At a later time we shall observe the kingdom in its *mountain* epoch, when it becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth.

Vision of four beasts

The four constituent parts of Nebuchadnezzar's visionary image were interpreted to signify four successive monarchies, the Babylonian being the first. In the seventh chapter Daniel records his own vision of four great beasts that arose out of the violently agitated sea, and these represent the same four kingdoms described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth" (verse 17). To the worldly, carnal mind of Nebuchadnezzar, empires possessed a show of grandeur and glory, and they were therefore represented ac-

cordingly in his vision; but to the spiritual-minded Daniel they would appear odious and terrible, and they were therefore represented to him under the symbol of devouring *beasts.*

The kingdoms symbolized by the first three beasts of this vision have no particular bearing on our subject, aside from assisting us in fixing the chronology of certain events. The first beast signifies the Babylonian Empire, corresponding to the head of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's vision; the second, the Medo-Persian, corresponding to the breast and arms of silver; the third, the Grecian, corresponding to the belly and thighs of brass. The description of these beasts shows that in one sense they are successive and in another sense simultaneous.

I have already shown that the entire image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was standing in the days of Roman ascendency, when the kingdom of God came. The same fact is brought out in the chapter now under consideration. After mentioning particularly the fourth beast, Daniel says, "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time" (verse 12). When these kingdoms lost their independent sovereignty, they still continued as provinces, ruled by another similar power.

The description of the fourth beast directly concerns our subject: "After this I saw in the night

visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (verses 7, 8).

The fourth beast

The interpretation of this beast given by the angel possesses unusual interest. "Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise" (verses 23, 24). Since the interpretation given by Daniel identifies the first kingdom with the Babylonian Empire, we have an infallible starting-stake. Therefore the "fourth" kingdom represented by the terrible nondescript beast of chapter 7 is none other than the Roman. The ten horns of this beast are interpreted to signify ten kings, or kingdoms, thus representing the ten minor kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was finally subdivided.

The description given of the tyrannical reign

of this fourth beast aptly portrays the history of Rome. By wars and conquests the Roman power broke down all opposition and reduced almost every kingdom in the then-known world to a state of dependence. She drew the spoils of their capitals to enlarge her own proud metropolis and thus tyrannized over all who did not quietly yield to her unquestioned obedience.

The beast considered as a beast, could signify nothing more than a political power, and the ten horns temporal kingdoms. But in this connection I wish to call attention to a singular fact; namely, that, associated with the animal propensities, there are certain characteristics drawn from human life. "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things" (verse 8).

The marvelous horn

A horn with the eyes and mouth of a man is a most unusual thing, and yet it is just such a combination as we might expect when we possess a correct understanding of the nature of symbols. These closely united symbols drawn from two departments—human and animal life—point us with absolute certainty to a temporal power combined with an ecclesiastical power. The chronology of the event is fixed by the fact that this eleventh horn came up

among the ten horns, three of the original ten being removed in order to give it room. The ten kingdoms all arose within two centuries after 356 A. D.; therefore the facts brought out in the symbol direct us to the period of the downfall of Western Rome for the rise into prominence of the little horn.

In giving Daniel the interpretation of the fourth beast, the angel also described more particularly this little horn and the nature of its work. First Daniel said: "I would know the truth of the fourth beast . . . and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them" (verses 19-21). And the angel explained: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth . . . and the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end" (verses 23-26).

With the explanation that the fourth beast signified the fourth kingdom, it is impossible to evade the conclusion that the politico-religious power symbolized by the little horn that came up among the ten horns refers directly to the papacy. There is no other object that can fulfil the prophecy. The papacy was just beginning to make itself strongly felt among the divisions of the Western Roman Empire, and it is a fact of history that three of the original ten divisions *in the territory of Italy* were actually plucked up successively before the rising papacy as if to give it room for development.

When the Western Empire was overthrown in A. D. 476, the kingdom of the Heruli was established in Italy. In 493 this was succeeded by the Ostrogoths, which continued for sixty years and was afterwards succeeded by the Lombards. The Lombard Kingdom was overthrown by Pepin and Charlemagne, who gave a large part of the conquered territory to the pope, thus favoring the papacy with her *first temporal power.* This grant completed the symbol of Daniel's vision by constituting the papacy a temporal as well as an ecclesiastical power.

The description of the great things spoken by the mouth of the little horn and of the persecution of the true saints of God by this power corresponds so minutely with the characteristics of the first beast of Revelation 13 that no further description is here necessary. It is said that he would

also "think to change times and laws." The language is spoken as if this were a most extraordinary thing to do. Surely it is no extraordinary thing for a king to alter *secular* laws in his own dominion; and so far as heathen kingdoms are concerned, it would be no sacrilegious act for them to alter their *religious* laws and customs. But the little horn was to set himself up against the Most High and think to change *His* times and laws—an act of unparalleled audacity, impiety, and blasphemy. This description the papacy has consistently and constantly fulfilled. The pope has assumed the power to make time holy or unholy as he sees fit; to command men to abstain from meat and to cease work, contrary to the demands of God. He has claimed the power to dispense with God's laws or obedience to them, "forbidding to marry," and through his indulgences to remit the penalty due to sin.

The student of prophecy can not fail to see the striking similarity between the description of the little horn in Daniel 7 and that of the ten-horned leopard-beast of Revelation 13. The following parallels prove their identity:

1. Both are blasphemous powers (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 13:6).

2. They speak great things and blasphemies (Dan. 7:8, 20; Rev. 13:5).

3. Both are persecuting powers making war on the saints (Dan. 7:21; Rev. 13:7).

4. The chronology of each shows that the power rose to prominence about the time of the cessation of the pagan Roman Empire.

5. The length of time during which they were to continue is the same—forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days.

6. Both are to be gradually but finally destroyed (Dan. 7:26; Rev. 13:10).

These powers, then, appear at the same time, in the same territory, have the same character, do the same work, continue the same length of time, and meet the same fate. *These facts prove identity.* We have, therefore, positive proof drawn from the parallel prophecies in Daniel that the first beast of Revelation 13 signifies the politico-religious system of Rome.

The identification of the little horn of Daniel 7 with the leopard-beast of Revelation 13 is now complete. That both apply to the papacy has been conclusively shown. We shall now turn our attention to the length of time that this power was to reign. Daniel limits the triumph of the little horn to "a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan. 7:25). "Time," in the singular, of course, signifies one time. "Times," plural, without a designating number, signifies two times. "The dividing of time" is rendered in chapter 12:7, also in both texts in the Revised Version, "a half." So the entire period is three and a half times.

Length of the papal reign

The seven-year period of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity is described as seven *times* (chap. 4:25). We therefore conclude that the period of three and a half times signifies three and a half years. This agrees with the reign of the leopard beast of Revelation 13, namely, "forty and two months" (verse 5), or according to the Jewish method of computing time—thirty days to the month—twelve hundred and sixty days. Notice that this also agrees both in the manner of statement and in point of duration with the flight of the woman into the wilderness, as described in Revelation 12. She was to be nourished for "a time, and times, and half a time" (verse 14), which period is spoken of in verse 6 of the same chapter as "a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

The terms ordinarily used to measure the duration of time may be and often are used in a symbolic sense; for time, as well as anything else, can be symbolized. Thus days may properly symbolize years; for they are analogous periods of time. the diurnal revolution of the earth being taken to represent the earth's annual movement. Other standards of reckoning may also be employed symbolically, but the one here referred to is doubtless most frequently employed. Such a system of reckoning time was known anciently. The Mosaic law recognized two kinds of weeks, the first of seven days' duration, the last day of which was a Sabbath; another week of seven years' duration,

the last year being a Sabbath of rest for the land. This fact explains such expressions as "forty days, *each day for a year*" (Num. 14:34), and "I have appointed thee each day for a year" (Ezek. 4:6).

There is no doubt that the year-day method of computing time is used in the prophecy of Daniel 9, the sixty-nine *weeks* reaching from the time of the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 B. C. until A. D. 26, the year when Christ was baptized and entered on his personal ministry.

Applying the year-day standard to the period of twelve hundred and sixty days, we have twelve hundred and sixty years. The next question to arise is, What date shall we select as the proper time from which to measure this 1,260-year period? It is important that we correctly solve this question. Expositors have selected different dates. They usually point out some particular historical date having an important bearing on Rome's development; as, for example, A. D. 606, when Phocas, Emperor of the East, accorded the Church of Rome special recognition. But the papacy grew up in the *West*. If we are to regard as of unusual importance political recognition of the claims of the papacy, why not give preference to imperial recognition in the very section that constituted the home of the papacy?

The correct starting-point

Before considering further the relation of the

growing papacy to the imperial power in the Western Empire, I must call attention to an important fact generally overlooked or disregarded by expositors. The 1,260-year period not only marks the time of triumph by the beast-power, but also *measures the period during which the woman, or true church, was to be secluded in the wilderness.* Two parallel lines of prophetic truth—respecting the true church and a false church—are therefore set forth as coexistent and in contrast with each other. The correct starting-stake can not, therefore, be when the papacy had obtained complete ascendency, for this would be too late to consistently begin to measure the decayed state of the true church. The date selected must be consistent with both lines of prophecy. The apostasy did not take place suddenly, however, but was a gradual decline, a "falling away"; and the papacy, on the other hand, did not rise to great power suddenly, but grew up by degrees. It was at first "a little horn," but finally his "look was more stout than his fellows." Paul says that the "mystery of iniquity"—the seed of apostasy—was already working in his day and that later "that Wicked" should be revealed in all its terrible features (see 2 Thess. 2:3-8). We therefore have to deal with a sliding-scale, a gradual decline on the part of the true church, and a constant increase of that false, apostate power which finally culminated in the full-grown papacy.

Bearing in mind that the 1,260-year period measures both phases, we are obliged to select for our beginning a time about half way between both extremes, a time when, we might say, the "falling away" from the pure apostolic truth and standard was about half completed and when the papacy was about half developed. While the woman was secluded in the wilderness, the beast-power occupied the public view; and this was exactly the reverse of apostolic times, when the woman was exalted above all and before all, "clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." In other words, the extreme of darkest night succeeded the light of glorious day.

The period of the first apostles was the period of the church's purity and triumph. In their hands the cause was safe and the pure truth shown forth in beauty and power. But with the close of the apostolic era, the apostasy came on at a rapid rate, as the extant writings of the early church fathers show.

By the middle of the fifth century the light of the gospel was eclipsed in the darkness of Romanism. During this century the papacy secured political recognition of its claims to direct jurisdiction over all churches. This occurred during the pontificate of Leo I, who, because of his success in furthering the interests of the popedom, shares alone with Pope Gregory the title of "the Great."

To quote from the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, Leo "entered upon a pontificate which was to be epoch-making for the centralization of the government of the church." Political causes combined to advance the claims of the papacy to universal recognition. Attila, with his fierce barbarians, invaded Italy and laid waste many of her fairest provinces and then advanced boldly on Rome, whereupon Pope Leo went out to the camp of the invaders and secured the evacuation of Italy. The pope obtained the full support of Valentinian III. In 445 Leo enforced authority in the distant patriarchate of Alexandria. In 444-446 he was in conflict with the Illyrian bishops. During this time in a letter addressed to them he laid down the principle that St. Peter had received the primacy and oversight of the whole church and that hence all important matters must be referred to and decided by Rome. He also proceeded to extend his authority over Gaul. In this effort he obtained from Valentinian III the famous decree of June 6, 445, which "recognized the primacy of the Pope of Rome based on the merits of Peter, the dignity of the city, and the decrees of Nice (in their interpolated form); ordained that any opposition to this rulings, which were to *have the force of law,* should be treated as treason; and provided for the forcible extradition by provincial governors of any one who refused to answer a summons to Rome."

The apostle John was banished to the Isle of Patmos in 95. Regarding that date as the close of the pure apostolic era, and 445, when the pope received from the emperor of the West official recognition of his claims to universal supremacy in the church, as representing one other extreme, we have but to calculate the time half way between these extremes to find the consistent starting-stake for the beginning of that time prophecy which is to measure both lines of prophetic truth. From 95 to 445 is a period of 350 years. Half of this period is 175 years. Therefore 175 years after 95, or 270, is the correct starting-point.

Protestant church historians recognize the decline that came in the early church. Many of them, as D'Aubigne, Marsh, Rutter, Waddington, and others, point to the third century, or the latter half of the third century, as marking an unusual epoch in this declension. Others, however, who view things almost wholly from the external point of view, regard the accession of Constantine in the early part of the following century as marking the important epoch. With reference to this subject, I quote Joseph Milner, the English ecclesiastical historian: "I know it is common for authors to represent the declension of Christianity to have taken place only after its external establishment under Constantine. But the events of history have compelled me to dissent from this view of things."—Ch. Hist., Cent. IV, Chap. I.

It is also evident from the facts of history that, in addition to the corruption of evangelical faith, that other phase of the apostasy—human ecclesiasticism—was also highly developed before the end of the third century. George P. Fisher says, "The accession of Constantine [A. D. 312] found the church so firmly organized under the hierarchy that it could not lose its identity by being absolutely merged in the state."—History of the Christian Church, p. 99.

In the year A. D. 270 Anthony, an Egyptian, the father of monasticism, fixed his abode in the deserts of Egypt and formed monks into organized bodies. Dowling, describing the extravagance of monkery and the false standard of piety and holiness it created, declares that monkery "*actually affected the church universal.*" See History of Romanism, pp. 88, 89. Very few marks of genuine piety remained. With the decline of evangelical knowledge came a reign of superstition and ignorance. Milner, adverting to the institution of monkery in the *third century,* expresses his "regret that the faith and love of the gospel received toward the close of it a dreadful blow from the encouragement of this unchristian practise."—Century III, Chap. XX.

In another place the same historian, speaking of the absence of truth and the prevalence of error in the third century, says: "It is vain to expect Christian faith to abound without Christian doc-

trine. Moral and philosophical and monastical instructions will not effect for men what is to be expected from evangelical doctrine. And if the faith of Christ was so much declined (and its decayed state *ought to be dated from about the year 270*), we need not wonder that such scenes as Eusebius hints at without any circumstantial details, took place in the Christian world."—Century IV, Chap. I. (Parenthetical clause is Milner's; italicizing, mine.) In addition to this quotation, and as if to give emphasis, the historian places prominently in a side-head the words, "*Decay of pure Christianity, A. D. 270.*"

Measuring forward from A. D. 270 the alloted period of twelve hundred and sixty years brings us to A. D. 1530, a year which marked the beginning of Protestantism in its organized form. The first Protestant creed, the Confession of Augsburg, was made that year.

The description of the papal power under the symbol of the ten-horned beast of Revelation 13 and the little horn of Daniel 7 presents a melancholy picture of world-events during the long period of twelve hundred and sixty years ending with the sixteenth century reformation.

Before proceeding to give in chronological order a description of events following the reign of the beast, I wish to call attention to an important plan followed in the Biblical presentation of prophetic truth; namely, that the events are taken up by

parallel series covering the same period of time. But in addition to this point, we observe the principle of *contrast*. When the history of political events is described, we have in contrast therewith a description of ecclesiastical events; and with the representation of a false church or an apostate state of Christianity, we have in immediate contrast the history of God's chosen people. Or perhaps the order is reversed, but the principle remains the same. While, in the nature of things, these distinct lines can not always be well represented symbolically as occurring at the same time, they are presented in parallel series, thus proving that they were to be fulfilled simultaneously.

Principle of parallelism

In direct contrast with the power of apostate Christendom represented by the papacy, which for certain reasons I have presented first, we have in chapter 11 of the Revelation a brief history of God's true people that existed during the papal reign. In this case, however, a description of the apostasy and of the true church are presented in the same series and in such a way as to give special emphasis to the point of contrast as well as to prove their simultaneous fulfilment. Thus we read: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for

it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sack-cloth'' (chap. 11:1-3).

It is clear that two powers in the Christian era are here represented, the one continuing ''forty and two months'' and the other twelve hundred and sixty days, or years, heretofore explained as measuring the length of the beast's reign, also of the woman's seclusion in the wilderness. This similarity naturally suggests that we have here the same general facts set forth under other symbols. Jerusalem, the holy city, the temple, and the two witnesses therefore correspond to the woman of chapter 12. The crowd of uncircumcised Gentiles and their profanation of the city of God for twelve hundred and sixty years correspond to the beast-power of chapter 13.

Wonderful truth is represented in the vision of this chapter. The symbols are drawn from Old Testament history, from the religious life of the Jews—God's chosen people in contrast with the uncircumcised Gentiles. It is evident, therefore, that the true church and the false church of the gospel era are represented.

Notice carefully the symbols: holy city, temple, altar, worshipers, and living witnesses, or prophets. These represent the sum and substance of all divine revelation in the Mosaic age: holy city,

Jerusalem—*the place where God set his name;* the temple—*divinely authorized, holy, acceptable worship* based on careful adherence to God's commandments formerly given; the altar—*the great symbol of atonement, the reconciliation of humanity with the divinity;* the worshipers in one temple—*all of God's people in unity;* the prophets—*the divinely commissioned representatives of God bearing a living message for the people of their time.* These conditions represent the Judaic ideal. Whether they were ever able to reach their ideal or not, it is evident that the Jews had the conception of a unified, holy, acceptable service (see Isa. 4:3; 52:1; 62:1-7). The two witnesses referred to are clearly represented as prophets; for the work ascribed to them as attesting their divine commission is a repetition of the miraculous works of Moses and Elijah by which they established their claims to be prophetic leaders authorized by Jehovah. The witnesses seem to be distinguished from the worshipers simply on account of their power and message.

These symbols represent the true apostolic church. It is the holy city, Jerusalem, his temple, whose holy, united worshipers obey the commands of God. The application of the "witnesses" particularly specified as they are in the description, requires further explanation. It is said, "These are the two olive-trees and the two candlesticks standing before the

The two witnesses

God of the earth'' (Rev. 11:4). Whatever these two witnesses signify in particular, they are the same as the olive-trees and candlesticks spoken of. It appears that allusion is made to Zechariah 4, where two olive-trees are represented as standing, one on each side of a golden candlestick, distilling into it their oil for light. When the angel was asked for an explanation of these two olive-trees and the candlestick, he answered, ''This is the *Word* of the Lord . . . by my *Spirit* saith the Lord'' (verse 6). We are to understand, therefore, that God's Word and Spirit are the ''two witnesses'' in his church; that is, they signify the divine element operating in his church. Just as the mediation of the prophets was necessary in the olden times to maintain constant contact with God, without which the religious exercises degenerated to mere formalism, so the living *Word* and *Spirit* of God were present in the apostolic church to elevate its service above mere human systems and forms of worship. That the Word of God and the Spirit of God are special witnesses is proved by many texts. Jesus said, ''Search the scriptures . . . they are they which *testify* of me'' (John 5:39). ''This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a *witness* unto all nations'' (Matt. 24:14). ''The Holy Ghost also is a *witness*'' (Heb. 10:15). ''The Spirit itself beareth *witness*'' (Rom. 8:16). ''It is the Spirit that beareth *witness*'' (1 John 5:6).

Of the uncircumcised Gentiles it is said, ''The

holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." This signifies the great apostasy that overspread the earth, defiling and perverting the true worship of God. The burden of this series, however, is not to describe the foreign element thus introduced, but to set forth in greater fulness the fact that during the same time that the idolatrous multitude of Gentiles trod down the holy city God preserved his own people. *The temple still remained,* and it had devout worshipers; *the two witnesses still prophesied,* although clothed in sackcloth, an emblem of melancholy and mourning. While the visions of the Revelator describe particularly the power of apostasy and iniquity reigning during the Dark Ages, they do not fail to give us the assurance that at the same time God had a people whose names were written in the book of life (chap. 13:8)—"saints" (chap. 13:10). And these were made the object of the most violent persecution (chap. 13:17; 17:6).

It is rather difficult to trace the true work of God during those times; for his "saints" were either ignored by the professed multitude or else regarded as heretics. But there existed in different countries bands of people who opposed the doctrines and ecclesiastical tyranny of Rome and who claimed adherence to the simple, primitive faith of Christ as expressed in the gospel. Among these were the Cathari, Lombards, Albigenses, Waldenses, and Vaudois. I will not say that all

these so-called heretics are to be regarded as the true people of God, but from the few records that we have of them, derived chiefly from their enemies, it seems clear that there were among them many who were truly "saints" and who clung tenaciously to the true faith of Christ. God's Word and Spirit were therefore prophesying, although in an unnatural condition, symbolized by the sackcloth state of the witnesses. We must also remember that even among the Catholic party were to be found noble persons whose hearts were true to whatever truth they had and whose emotions and aspirations at times broke over the bounds of traditional theology and gave expression to sentiments Scriptural and sublime.

The time period first specified in this special scene is the same twelve hundred and sixty years that marks the reign of the beast and therefore closes with the reformation of the sixteenth century. We shall have occasion to return to this series later and trace its predictions down to our own times.

CHAPTER XIII

ERA OF MODERN SECTS

We have seen that the 1,260-year universal reign of the first beast of Revelation 13 ends with the period of the Reformation. The exact manner in which this should be accomplished is not definitely given in the prophecy, aside from the statement, "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword" (verse 10). This description would seem to indicate a period of captivity in which the papacy would be deprived of its great power, after which it would be finally destroyed; and this agrees with Paul's description of the papacy in 2 Thessalonians 2, where he speaks of that Wicked "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (verse 8). And Daniel, speaking of the end of the 1,260-year reign of the same papal beast, points out a reformation time when "they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end" (Dan. 7:26).

Another epoch predicted

There is no doubt that these references point out the work of the Reformation which broke the power of Rome's universal supremacy and her long reign of tyranny over the earth. Humanism, discovery of the art of printing, the revival of

learning, and other causes contributed to this result. But the real revolt came in 1517, when Luther in Saxony nailed to the church-door in Wittenberg his ninety-five theses against the papal traffic in indulgences. The Reformers made their appeal from the decisions of Councils to the inspired Word of God, and this was the secret of their success. With wonderful power and boldness they proclaimed truth that had been neglected or discredited for ages. The holy fire spread over western Europe. Men became agitated as if moved by a mighty unseen power, until the papacy was shaken from end to end.

We regret that the true work of reformation did not long continue. A. D. 1530 marks a new epoch —the rise of organized Protestantism; marks the end of the 1,260-year period, and the introduction of another ecclesiastical power. The historian D'Aubigne recognizes the distinction between the Reformation as such and organized Protestantism. In his well-known work, History of the Reformation, he says: "The first two books of this volume contained the most important epochs of the Reformation—the Protest of Spires and the Confession of Augsburg. . . . I determined on bringing the reformation of Germany and German-Switzerland to the *decisive epochs* of 1530 and 1531. The History of the Reformation, properly so-called, is then in my opinion almost complete in those countries.

Protestantism in prophecy

The work of faith has there attained its apogee: that of conferences, of interims, of diplomacy begins. . . . The movement of the sixteenth century has there made its effort. I said from the very first, It is the History of the Reformation, and not of Protestantism, that I am relating."—Preface to Volume IV.

Protestantism, then, is to be distinguished from the Reformation. Considering its prominence in the ecclesiastical world, we should naturally expect to find it represented in the symbols of the Revelation. Strangely enough, few commentators ever make the least effort to identify Protestantism with any of the symbols of this book. Mohammedanism is there; Paganism is there; *the true church* is there, and, it is universally admitted, *the false church* is there. Therefore, whether Protestantism be true or false, *it* must be there, but where?

The application of the first beast of Revelation 13 to the papacy has been so clearly established that the point is well-nigh indisputable. The period of its universal supremacy is clearly limited to the 1,260 years. And every one knows that it was the sixteenth century reformation that ended that period of tyranny. We have shown that that period ends with A. D. 1530. The prophecy immediately following describes Protestantism in these words:

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of

the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six'' (Rev. 13: 11-18).

The two-horned beast

Protestant commentators generally apply both the ten-horned beast and the two-horned beast to Rome, the first representing the political power,

and the second the ecclesiastical power. But this position, while clearing Protestantism of any moral stigma, is such a manifest violation of the laws of symbolic language and the general principles of Scriptural interpretation that I marvel that any critical thinker could decide to adopt it. The two beasts are especially distinguished, and in each case the symbol is complete. The first beast combines with its beastly characteristics the qualities of the human, as did the little horn of Daniel 7, thus clearly and positively representing *both the political and the ecclesiastical dominion* of Rome. It is the human characteristics that constitute the leading feature of the terrible work ascribed to the first beast; therefore the papacy *as a religious power* is particularly intended. Hence the second beast can not be intended to represent the ecclesiastical phase of Rome. Notice, also, that the symbol of the second beast is likewise complete in itself—animal and human—thus embracing both the political and the ecclesiastical. *Another system totally distinct from the first is therefore represented.*

I call attention to certain distinct points proving that these two beasts are not identical or simultaneous:

1. The first is spoken of as "a beast"; the second is called "another beast."

2. The first came up from the sea; the second came out of the earth.

3. The first was like a leopard; the second was like a lamb.

4. The first had ten horns signifying ten temporal kingdoms; the second had two horns, referring to but two temporal powers that supported it.

5. The first blasphemed God and his tabernacle, and was therefore antichrist; the second claimed to be the true prophet of God and brought down "fire from heaven" to attest his claim, but he was in reality a "false prophet" (chap. 16:13; 19:20).

6. The first obtained his power and authority from the dragon which preceded him; while the second derived his power from the ten-horned beast "before him."

7. The first caused people to worship the preceding power styled "the dragon"; while the second caused people to "worship the first beast."

8. The first was to continue 1,260 years; while the reign of the second is not here stated, but is covered in a parallel prophecy to which we shall refer later.

The first beast came up out of the sea, which signifies the empire in an agitated state; and it is a fact of history that the ten kingdoms came up through great political convulsions. The empire was in a state of comparative quiet, however, when the second beast "*came up out of the earth.*" This beast stands as the symbol of Protestantism in

Europe, although his power and influence was afterwards to extend to "the whole world" (chap. 16:14). But this beast existed first on the same territory occupied by the papacy; therefore the two horns doubtless signify temporal kingdoms also, and two of the original ten. The two nations first to turn violently against the papacy and to become the chief supporters and defenders of Protestantism were Germany and England.

It is evident that the second beast of Revelation 13 was not to be such a terrible power politically as was the first beast, for it is described merely as having "two horns *like a lamb.*" But as soon as we enter the department to which *speaking* by analogy refers us, we find him to be a great religious power, and it is in this character alone that he is delineated in the remainder of the chapter. That his religious power is his leading characteristic is further proved by the fact that in every subsequent reference he is styled the "false prophet" (chap. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). Every reference which I give to the second beast must therefore be understood as signifying the religious system known as Protestantism.

This beast was to exercise great power—"all the power of the first beast before him." By this expression we are to understand that Protestantism was to exert a universal influence; that it was to become a leading factor in the world's history, as was Romanism before it. This has already been

fulfilled. The leading nations of the world today, the nations that have contributed most to the development of modern civilization and to the light and progress of the age, are Protestant nations. Those countries that have retained the yoke of Romanism are still withering under its blighting influence.

It is said that this beast causes people to "worship the first beast." This is parallel to the statement that during the reign of the first beast the people "worshiped the dragon," which in reality preceded it. I have shown that the devotees of Romanism worshiped the dragon by perpetuating in their religious ceremonies and worship the practises of paganism. Likewise Protestants have brought over and incorporated in their religious system doctrines, rites, and ceremonies that originated in Romanism; and in this respect they worship the first beast, even in the very act of rendering service to their own system. Such doctrines as infantile damnation, sprinkling for baptism, the eternal destruction of all those who are outside the pales of the church, infant baptism, and other things are all children of the apostasy originating in Rome. The Romish Church possesses a human ecclesiastical headship and an earthly government ruling in the place of Christ, and Protestants make an "image" to this beast by building their sects in imitation—sects made and ruled by men. To these they attach their own names and the distinctive

creeds and doctrines of men, and thus their devotees receive the "mark" and "name" of the beast.

At this point we must make a distinction which, being true in the facts of history, must necessarily be intended in the symbolic representation. This beast was to bring down "fire from heaven." According to the symbols of chapter 12, the woman, or true church, "fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." The time prophecy is the same, and covers the same period, as the reign of the papal beast. Therefore, just as an important change in the papacy occurred at the expiration of that prophetic period, so also a radical change must be expected with reference to the true church: it must be no longer completely obscured in the wilderness. Now, as the Reformation and Protestantism as a religion were the means of ending Rome's universal spiritual supremacy, so also they must be regarded as possessing sufficient light and truth to bring into prominence once more the work of the Spirit and the true people of God. "Fire from heaven" may therefore be regarded as describing the divine work of reformation, the unfolding of truth accompanied by the saving power of God. Such spiritual work has accompanied the origin of various religious movements during the Protestant era.

The general description of the two-horned beast, however, makes prominent an evil characteristic —the disposition to lead the people into deception by making an image to the beast and then worshiping it. The evil is not located in the ability to bring down fire from heaven, but in the deceptive work of image-making and image-worship, for which the spiritual work simply furnished an occasion. The spiritual work of reformation is, therefore, to be distinguished from the later work of creed- and sect-making; and since the beast takes advantage of the manifestation of spiritual power and deceives men, he becomes a sort of apostate and is denominated "the false prophet" (see chap. 16:13; 19:20).

The beast, ecclesiastically considered, stands as the symbol of the religious system and practise of Protestantism as a whole—a peculiar combination of truth and error, of good and bad, of "fire from heaven" and false miracle-working power (chap. 16:14); while the "image to the beast" signifies the sectarian institution—the man-made and man-controlled unscriptural sect machinery constructed in imitation of the papal original. To construct such earth-born churches and lead people to adore and worship them is but a species of idolatry and the rankest deception. It is a sad fact, in Protestantism as well as in Catholicism, that vast multitudes of people are more devoted to their respective churches than to the Lord Jesus Christ. They

can witness the open rejection of God's precious Word and the vilest profanation of his holy name without uttering a word of protest; but let any one say a word against *their church,* and instantly they are aroused to the highest pitch of indignation. *Beast-worshipers!*

The Protestant era has witnessed many wonderful reformations in which the true fire of God fell upon waiting souls, but this initial work of the Spirit has in each instance been employed as an excuse for taking the next step—making an image; and thousands of honest souls, lacking better light, have been induced to submit to such human organization. Those of this number who were truly saved, however, always loved and adored their Lord more than the human church to which they were attached, and consequently they should not be regarded as beast-worshipers. They are the ones whom the Lord denominates *his people* when the voice calls them out of Babylon (chap. 18:4).

The second beast also exhibits the characteristics of a persecuting power, and in this respect it is similar to the ten-horned beast. The early history of Protestantism shows that at that time the principle of religious intolerance brought over from Romanism manifested itself in the actual putting to death of numerous dissenters. Thus, we find Calvin, at Geneva, consenting to the burning of Servetus because of a difference in relig-

ious views. At a convention in Torgau, in 1574, the Lutherans established the real presence of Christ in the eucharist and then instigated the Elector of Saxony to seize, imprison, and banish those who differed from them in sentiment, as a result of which Peucer suffered ten years of the severest imprisonment and Crellius was put to death. The Protestant Council of Zurich condemned Felix Mantz to be drowned because he insisted that infant sprinkling was not baptism. In England the "Bloody Six Articles" of Henry VIII are a silent testimony to the intolerant spirit of that age, when the royal reformer dragged dissenters forth to execution. Witness also the twelve years' imprisonment of John Bunyan and hundreds of others confined in jails throughout the country; the persecution of the Quakers; the relentless opposition to the Covenanters of Scotland, who were hunted and destroyed like beasts because they insisted on their right to worship God in their own way. It was this intolerant spirit that drove the Puritans to the inhospitable shores of America, where they might have the free privilege of worshiping God according to the dictates of their own conscience.

It is possible that the persecuting principle ascribed to the two-horned beast may include both the literal and the ecclesiastical cutting off, reference being made directly to the spirit of intolerance which manifested itself first in literal

slaughter and later in an unwarranted ecclesiastical exclusiveness.

The "number of the beast" alludes to his pretentious claims and is probably a symbol of division. The definite number 666 is said to be also the number of a man, and since the pope is the most important man connected with the papal system, it is natural to identify him with the individual referred to. Paul doubtless pointed out the pope particularly as the "*man of sin,*" "the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3). In former ages, before the modern system of notation was introduced, the only method of denoting numbers was by employing the letters of the alphabet, certain letters having the power of number as well as of sound. We still employ the same system for certain purposes. The number of a name was simply the number denoted by the several letters of that name.

The pope has a special title. He wears in jeweled letters upon his mitre the inscription, *Vicarius Filii Dei*—Vicar of the Son of God. Taking from his name all the letters that the Latins used for numerals, we have just 666.

The era of modern sects is also covered in other places in Revelation, for the ecclesiastical history of the Christian dispensation is described under different parallel series of symbolism. In the other series, however, the symbols representing Protestantism stand so closely connected with

predictions of the last reformation that I shall not attempt to enumerate them in this chapter, but shall consider them briefly in connection with those symbols describing the great final religious movement toward which all the prophetic lines of truth converge and which forms the special subject of the present work.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LAST REFORMATION

The scene changes, and again we have the picture of God's chosen people set in bright relief against the dark background of Protestantism and the still darker shades of papal apostasy.

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Rev. 14:1-5).

The 144,000 on Mount Zion

What a contrast with the beast powers described in the preceding chapter of the Revelation! This redeemed company is on Mount Zion, not hidden

in the darkness of the wilderness. They are with the Lamb, not wandering after the beast. Instead of being oppressed and overcome by opposers, they are singing the joyful song of redemption and harping with their harps; and instead of having the "mark of the beast," they have their "*Father's name written in their foreheads.*" The manner in which this joyful, redeemed company is distinguished from the host of beast-worshipers brought to light under the preceding symbols, proclaims unmistakably the fact that we have here a description of the true people of God who have obtained victory over the apostasy. In other words, a distinct reformation is predicted.

This sublime scene is not a description of heaven, for the context shows its direct contact with the forms of apostate Christianity with which it is placed in contrast on earth. Certain leading figures in the scene, as Christ the Lamb and a number of angels, are heavenly beings; but their presence simply shows the divine character of the work in contrast with those other religious powers, one of which came up out of the sea and the other out of the earth. Besides, we have already shown that whenever angels figure in the symbolic scene *on earth,* they represent distinguished agencies among men, and the message of good angels, being obviously from heaven, is therefore the message of God. When different angels, bearing different messages, appear in the same general symbolic

scene, they represent not isolated or independent movements, but different phases of the same work.

The Revelator introduces another phase of the religious movement under consideration with these words: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (verses 6, 7).

In the message of the angel there are set forth a number of distinct truths. Prominence is given to the call to worship the one true God. This stands in contrast with the apostasy preceding; for under the papacy its adherents "worshiped the dragon" and "they worshiped the beast," while the second beast caused people to "worship the first beast" and to "worship the image of the beast." The message of this angel is universal and indicates a world-wide missionary effort in which the true God and his holy worship alone will be exalted, and that before the end of time, for the judgment is set forth as an impending event for which men must speedily prepare.

But the description does not end here. An awful revelation, falling like hail-stones or coals of fire upon the heads of the devotees of modern

churchianity, is proclaimed by divine authority: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation" (verses 8-10).

Here we are brought face to face with some of the most solemn truths contained in the Book of God. The very powers of apostate Christianity just described under the symbols of two beasts are now represented *by the angel* as Babylon; for, be it observed, the divine message is against those who worship the beast *and his image*. The image was made by the second beast. Therefore Babylon includes both Romanism and Protestantism—the whole realm of formal churchianity; and beast-worship is here condemned in one of the most terrible denunciations found in all the Word of God. All the evils inherent in the false, unscriptural systems of so-called Christianity are here summed up under the one word *Babylon,* of which we shall have more to say later.

Two things prominently brought out in these symbols should be remembered, however—first, that even during the reign of the beast and his

image, God had true people who were carefully distinguished in the prophecy as those whose names were written in the book of life and who would not "worship the image of the beast"; and second, that the symbolic scene now being considered represents these saved individuals as gathered out into one company with the Lamb on Mount Zion, before the end of time. The illustration is that of the joyful Israelites who made their return to Zion after the fall of literal Babylon, where they were long held in captivity. This is the illustration and the prophetic description; therefore we may rest assured that just as truly as time revealed the rise of the papal and Protestant systems, as set forth in the symbols of the Revelation, just so surely will there come *before the end of time* a revival of pure, apostolic Christianity, a reformation in which the true people of God will take their stand outside of all forms of the apostasy and carry the full gospel of the Son of God to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

We have traced in prophetic symbolism the four epochs of the Christian dispensation represented respectively by the star-crowned woman, the leopard-beast, the two-horned beast, and the redeemed company gathered together with the Lamb on Mount Zion. The papal period, represented by the leopard-beast, continued for 1,260 years, its universal sway terminating with the sixteenth cen-

tury reformation. The length of the Protestant reign following is not stated in this series.

Let us now return to the description of the two witnesses given in Revelation 11. We have already considered the first part of that symbolic description pertaining to the 1,260 years during which the holy city was to be trodden under foot and the two witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth; and we have shown that this description is exactly parallel with the prophecy that set forth the period of the papal supremacy. But the description continues, covering the era of modern sects and leading up to the work of a final reformation.

The two witnesses

After describing the 1,260-year prophecy of the two witnesses, the narrative continues: "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth" (Rev. 11:7-10).

This intricate picture of symbolical imagery is placed chronologically just after the 1,260-year reign of Romanism and hence it was to meet its fulfilment during the Protestant era. It describes in the most graphic and realistic manner the evil characteristics and tendencies of the sect-system. I have already shown that in the primitive church the two witnesses—the Word and the Spirit of God—were the real vicars of Christ, giving both character and government to the universal church of God on earth. We have also seen that with the rise of human ecclesiasticism the reign of the Word and Spirit ended in so far as the Church of Rome was concerned. The same is true also of Protestantism. The establishment of man-made creeds and the concentration and centralization of church power and governmental authority in human hands—a church-rule patterned after the kingdoms of this world—is a *rejection of the divine government of God* just as the appointment of a king in the Old Testament times was a rejection of God's plan of governing Israel. In this sense God's two witnesses have been openly ignored and rejected in Protestantism as well as in Romanism and the ancient churches of the East, and man-made creeds and systems of government substituted in their stead. They are, therefore, represented as slain, although of course a certain amount of respect is still shown them in that they

The witnesses slain

are not suffered to be wholly put out of sight.

"And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly" (verses 11-14).

The witnesses resurrected

The resurrection of the witnesses doubtless signifies a time of reformation and implies its true character. If the death of the witnesses was the result of ecclesiasticism and false teaching, their resurrection must signify a final triumph over ecclesiasticism and the restoration of primitive Christianity under the direct authority and government of God. Even omitting all details in this complex description, we can scarcely avoid the conclusion that if the general description given in this chapter means anything, it means the restoration of Christianity before the end of time to the condition in which it existed before the apostasy.

The time prophecy "three days and a half" is difficult to explain except in the light of clearly

ascertained historical facts. The term "day" is of itself very indefinite, being used in the Scriptures to designate periods of different length. In the description under consideration it evidently can not signify the ordinary 24-hour day nor yet the year-day; for it covers the Protestant period following the 1,260-year reign of Romanism and preceding the Last Reformation—the same period of time covered by the second beast of Revelation 13.

The time prophecy

The events of the Protestant period naturally divide it into shorter epochs of about a century each in length. The historian D'Aubigne, who wrote about 1835, noticed this distinction and referred to it in his famous History of the Reformation. These are his words: "It has been said that the three last centuries, the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth may be conceived as an immense battle of *three days'* duration. We willingly adopt this beautiful comparison . . . the first day was the battle of God, the second the battle of the priest, the third the battle of Reason. What will be the fourth? In our opinion the confused strife, the deadly contest of all these powers together TO END IN THE VICTORY OF HIM TO WHOM TRIUMPH BELONGS." —Book XI, Chap. 9.

"Three days and a half," or three hundred and fifty years, after the formation of the first Protestant creed, in 1530, God began to reveal special

light and truth on his Word and to cause a great awakening, which is gradually resulting in the rejection of human ecclesiastical rule, the recognition of the primitive government of God, and the restoration of all the pure truths of the Word of God.

Another point in the prophecy under consideration assists us in fixing the chronology of the reformation predicted. The "great earthquake" stands closely associated with the time of the resurrection and exaltation of the witnesses. The principles of interpreting symbols would lead us to identify this earthquake as a mighty political convulsion destructive in its nature, and yet one that would be overruled for the furtherance of Christ's kingdom—a convulsion that would also terminate the destructive reign of the "second woe." I can not here digress to give proofs, but there is no doubt that the second woe of Revelation (see chap. 9:13-20) signifies the political dominancy of the Ottoman Empire. This power, constituting the political backbone of Mohammedanism, has indeed been a most serious woe upon the inhabitants of the earth and an obstacle in the path of true missionary progress. With these facts before us, we can clearly see that the earthquake was the great European War and that we are now living in the time when a special reformation is due.

Another parallel series of prophecies covering

OUTLINE OF PARALLEL PROPHECIES SHOWING FOUR ECCLESIASTICAL EPOCHS

The Apostolic Period	The Medieval Period	Era of Modern Sects	The Last Reformation
DRAGON Rev. 12:3, 4, 7-17	LEOPARD-BEAST Rev. 13:1-10	TWO-HORNED BEAST Rev. 13:11-18	FALL OF BABYLON Rev. 14:1-9
PURE WOMAN Rev. 12	WOMAN SECLUDED IN THE WILDERNESS Rev. 12:6		144,000 ON MOUNT ZION Rev. 14:1-6
TEMPLE AND TRUE WORSHIP Rev. 11:1	HOLY CITY TRODDEN DOWN Rev. 11:2	TWO WITNESSES SLAIN Rev. 11:7-10	WITNESSES RESURRECTED Rev. 11:11-14
	GREAT BABYLON Rev. 17:1-6	HARLOT DAUGHTERS Rev. 17:5	GOD'S PEOPLE CALLED OUT Rev. 18:1-4
FOURTH BEAST Dan. 9:7, 23, 24	REIGN OF THE "LITTLE HORN" Dan. 7:8, 20-25		CHRIST'S KINGDOM TRIUMPHANT Dan. 7:26, 27; 2:34, 35

the same ground and terminating at the same point will bring the subject of the Last Reformation to a grand climax. I have shown that the religious powers described in Revelation 13 as two beasts were also termed Babylon. We shall now give a more particular description of this antitype of the Old Testament Babylon. The Euphratean city—Babylon—the proud metropolis of the Chaldean monarchy, combined in itself the corruptions and wickedness of the world and then filled up the measure of its sins by destroying the temple in Jerusalem and leading into captivity the chosen people of God. When John wrote, however, this ancient city was no more. It had long since been destroyed, and it has never been rebuilt to this day. Even the Arab refuses to pitch his tent among its lonely, serpent-infested ruins. The city to which the apostle alludes in these prophecies must therefore refer, not to ancient Babylon, but to some other analogous power which was yet to arise and of which the old Babylon was a type.

Another important series

A more particular description of the antitypical Babylon is given by the Revelator in the seventeenth chapter, as follows: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed

Great Babylon

fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw a woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration" (verses 1-6).

The careful student will immediately perceive that we have here another representation of the same apostate powers already described under other symbols. The leading figures—a woman and a beast—combine symbols from human life and animal life, thus representing clearly the union of civil and ecclesiastical power. The combination is exactly the same in its essential characteristics as that presented by the first beast of Revelation 13. And since it is the same seven-headed and ten-horned beast, representing the same political power, we conclude that the human characteristics exhibited in this connection symbolize the same

religious power—the Church of Rome. In the present vision, however, the ecclesiastical phase is singled out and particularly distinguished and described, thus placing special emphasis on the papal church itself in contradistinction to the temporal power of the empire. The political phase of Rome's history has already been sufficiently described for our present purpose. We shall, therefore, devote our attention to the ecclesiastical phase as developed under this particular symbol of the woman.

The nature of the symbol itself fixes the interpretation. A woman must of necessity symbolize a church, but we must determine by the character of the woman whether or not the true church or a false church is represented. The woman of the vision was splendidly attired and evidently occupied a prominent place; for she is represented as riding on the beast, the political empire, thus directing its course; and she is also represented as sitting upon many waters, interpreted as "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (verse 15), denoting her wide influence over distant nations. She is not simply represented as a prominent person, however, but *as a vile character.* She is "a great whore," "with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication." It is clear that in Scripture false, idolatrous worship is represented as *whoredom* (see 1 Chron. 5:25; Ezekiel 16 and 23). Hence a false church is represented.

There is only one church that can fulfil the description, and that is the Church of Rome. Long has she delighted in calling herself the "mother church," but centuries before she made this claim, the pen of inspiration affixed to her indelibly the title of "*mother*"—"MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." She bore upon her forehead this inscription, together with the title "Mystery, Babylon the Great." Other false apostate churches there are, but she heads the list and is the mother of them all. No wonder the apostle marveled when he saw this professed church of Jesus Christ defiled by the most abominable wickedness, in league with all the evil powers of earth, and, above all, "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." That Rome from the date she became firmly established in power has ever been a constant persecutor of the saints, the pages of all history abundantly attest. Even Rome's ecclesiastical writers and historians themselves admit her use of force in destroying those whom she denominated heretics.

Mother and daughters

Revelation 17 covers the same period chronologically and ends at the same point of time as did chapter 13. Hence we should naturally suppose that it would also describe in some manner the power symbolized by the two-horned beast—Protestantism—as well as duplicate the description of

the ten-horned beast—Catholicism. That the papacy is symbolized in chapter 17 by the corrupt whore sitting on the ten-horned beast, is too plain to need any particular demonstration. The other division of the apostasy is included under the term "harlots," the daughters of the "mother" church. In our interpretation of chapter 14 we showed that the angel clearly applied the term Babylon to the worshipers of the second beast—Protestantism—as well as to those of the first beast. Therefore we must regard Babylon as a general term denoting the whole city of religious confusion, the mother and her harlot daughters being simply specific divisions.

Testimony of commentators

Many commentators, even Protestant commentators, have been frank enough to admit the real application and force of these symbols of Revelation as applying to both Catholicism and Protestantism. Auberlen asserts that "'harlot' means, in the Old and New Testaments, the apostate church of God." —Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, p. 278. Again, he says, "Not simply Rome, but Christendom as a whole, even as Israel as a whole, has become a harlot. The true believers are hidden and dispersed."—Ibid., p. 290. While it may not be exactly in accordance with the Scriptures to speak of the true church of God as being apostate, yet in a sense it is true, for a large part of those who originally constituted the church of God actually

did apostatize, until a false church assumed almost universal sway and divers forms of error prevailed, practically eclipsing, for a long period, the true church of God on earth. Auberlen stated his conclusion in these words: "Notwithstanding the universal character of the harlot, it remains true that the Roman and Greek churches are in a more peculiar sense the harlot than the Evangelical Protestant."—P. 294.

In the well-known Commentary by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, the Rev. A. R. Fausset, writing on Rev. 17:2, says of the harlot: "It can not be Pagan Rome but Papal Rome, if a particular seat of error be meant, but I am inclined to think that the judgment (chap. 18:2) and the spiritual fornication (chap. 18:3), though finding their culmination in Rome, are not restricted to it, but comprise the whole apostate church—Roman, Greek, and even Protestant, so far as it has been seduced from its 'first love' to Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, and given its affections to worldly pomps and idols."

William Kincaid, in Bible Doctrine, p. 249, says: "I think Christ has a true church on earth, but its members are scattered among the various denominations, and are more or less under the influence of mystery Babylon and her daughters."

Alexander Campbell said: "The worshiping establishments now in operation throughout Christendom, increased and cemented by their respec-

tive voluminous confessions of faith, and their ecclesiastical constitutions, are not churches of Jesus Christ, but the legitimate daughters of that mother of harlots, the Church of Rome."

Lorenzo Dow says of the Romish Church: "If she be the mother, who are the daughters? It must be the corrupt, national, established churches that came out of her."—Dow's Life, p. 542.

Again, Hahn in Auberlen says: "The harlot is not Rome alone (though she is preeminently so), but every church that has not Christ's mind and spirit. False Christendom, divided into very many sects, is truly Babylon, i. e., confusion."

The description of the two forms of the apostasy, Papal and Protestant, given in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, was conveyed under the symbols of two beasts, differing in external appearance, but in certain respects similar in character. Immediately following that representation there is, as we have already shown, a description of a distinct reformatory work set forth by the 144,000 with the Lamb on Mount Zion, the fall of Babylon, and the promulgation of the everlasting gospel in all the world. The term "Babylon" as used in that scripture is applied to both the worshipers of the beast and the worshipers of the image of the beast (made by the second beast); therefore it embraces both forms of the apostasy.

We have just seen that the description of Bab-

ylon, given in Revelation 17 under the symbols of a corrupt woman and her harlot daughters, represent the papal church and the divisions of Protestantism. We shall now proceed to show that the two lines of prophecy (chaps. 13 and 17) are parallel chronologically, for they both end at the same time and in the same manner.

The last reformation

As the first of these two series of prophecy ended with the fall of Babylon and the deliverance therefrom of a people who were with the Lamb, not wandering after the beast, and who had "the Father's name written in their foreheads," not the name or the mark of the beast, so also the second series ends in the same manner. After describing Babylon under its twofold form, mother and daughters, the Revelator says: "After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of

her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues'' (chap. 18:1-4).

A movement of mighty power is symbolized in these verses. The language is based on the experience of the ancient Israelites in literal Babylon, who, when the fall of the city occurred, obtained release from their enforced captivity, and were permitted to return to their own land. The real meaning in this case is clear: that apostate Christianity has been a veritable Babylon in which the true people of God have been held as in captivity, and that the time of their deliverance would come, when they would, by divine authority, be called out. Notice the parallelism in the two descriptions of the fall of Babylon. In chapter 14 an angel declares ''Babylon is fallen, is fallen'' (verse 8), and the next angel *with a loud voice* warns that those who ''worship the beast and his *image* . . . shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God'' (verses 9, 10); while in chapter 18 the first angel cries ''mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen'' (verse 2), and ''*another voice* from heaven'' says, ''COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye *receive not of her plagues''* (verse 4).

That this symbolic picture represents a wonderful religious reformation is almost too clear to need proof, for it succeeded chronologically, and is placed in direct contrast with, the apostasy;

hence there can be but one logical conclusion, namely, that neither Catholicism nor Protestantism is the last work and that God has authorized a work that shall gather his true people out of the entire babel of sect confusion. And that this movement is to be effected before the end of time is also clearly shown. In the following chapter, after describing God's judgment on Babylon, and the call of his people out of her, "a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great" (verse 5). God's servants are called upon to rejoice on account of their deliverance. Those who are at heart image-makers and beast-worshipers will oppose this truth, and when they witness the departure of the faithful followers of the Lord, leaving to Babylon nothing but the godless, graceless professors, they will "weep and mourn over her" (chap. 18:16) and cry, "Alas, alas that great city" (verse 16). But the voice of heaven calls on the saints for a song of thanksgiving, saying, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets" (verse 20). Yea, "praise our God, *all ye his servants,* and ye that fear him, both small and great" (chap. 19:5).

Are we to expect such a response? Yes. It is true in the prophecy and will therefore be true in fact before time ends. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunder-

ings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints'' (chap. 19:6-8).

The scriptures just cited complete another line of symbolic truth. The primitive church was represented as a pure woman, the bride (chap. 12:1). During the reign of the papacy a false, immoral woman reigned over the kings of the earth, while the true woman, or church, was hidden 'in the wilderness' (chap. 12:6). Under the reign of Protestantism her members were scattered in all parts of the city of Babylon. But, thank God, they are to be called out of their scattered condition, and as a company are represented in two forms—first, as a redeemed host with the Lamb on Mount Zion, bearing the Father's name only (chap. 14:1-5), and second, *as the bride of Christ* preparing herself for the soon coming of the Lord. This is proof positive that the true church is to be brought out and placed on exhibition *before the end of time.*

Others of the sacred writers describe this same prophetic movement. Zechariah predicts it thus: ''And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that *at evening*

time it shall be light'' (Zech. 14:6, 7). These verses stand a little clearer in the Septuagint Version: "And it shall come to pass in that day [the papal day] that there shall be *no light*: and there shall be for one day [the Protestant day] *cold and frost*: and that day shall be known to the Lord; it shall not be day or night [a mixture of light and darkness]: but *towards evening it shall be light.''*

We have seen that Daniel predicted the long reign of darkness and apostasy in the Christian dispensation. Desiring to understand the matter, he made inquiry, and although the same thoughts are beautifully expressed in the Authorized Version, I shall, nevertheless, quote from the Septuagint, which makes the thought still clearer: *"When will be the end* of the wonders which thou hast mentioned? And I heard the man clothed in linen . . . swear by Him that lives forever, that it should be for a time of times and half a time: when the dispersion is ended they shall know all these things'' (Dan. 12:6, 7).

"A time, and times, and the dividing of time'' is the same prophetic period of 1,260 years, the reign of the papacy. This was to be followed by a period of "dispersion,'' and such Protestantism has been, for the people of God have been scattered in hundreds of bodies. But this dispersion was to be *"ended''* some time, and then the people of God would "know all these things.'' "And I heard, but I understood not: and said I, O Lord,

what will be the end of these things? And he said, Go, Daniel: for the words are closed and sealed up *to the time of the end"* (verse 9). At the "time of the end" the dispersal of God's saints was to cease. This predicts the evening-time reformation, and the nature of its work is shown in the following verse: "Many must be CHOSEN OUT, *and thoroughly whitened, and tried with fire, and sanctified"* (verse 10).

The same spiritual movement is also predicted by Ezekiel. In chapter 34 he describes the people of God as sheep (see verse 31). These sheep are represented as abused, oppressed, and scattered by false shepherds. Their gathering in this Last Reformation is predicted in verses 11 and 12: "For thus saith the Lord God; Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; *so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day."*

Reader, this is the work of reformation that God is now accomplishing in the world. Babylon is spiritually fallen, and God is calling his people out. In the well-known Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Rev. A. R. Fausset, commenting on Rev. 18:4, has well said: "Even in the Romish Church, God has a people; but they are in great danger; their only safety is in coming out

of her at once. So also in every apostate or world-conforming church, there are some of God's visible and true church, who, if they would be safe, *must come out.*"

When literal Babylon was overthrown, the Jews escaped to their own land. Likewise God's people in spiritual Babylon are commanded to come out, and with songs of rejoicing they are to make their way to Mount Zion, and then lend all their efforts to the one work of restoring primitive truth, thus making Jerusalem "the joy of the whole earth." Like the Jews of old, "the ransomed of the Lord *shall return* and COME TO ZION with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

The Psalmist informs us that in Babylon the Jews hung their harps on the willows and wept when they remembered Zion. When their captors demanded of them the songs of Zion, they answered despairingly, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Psa. 137:1-4). Zion's songs were *songs of deliverance;* hence the Jews could not sing them in captivity. So also has it been in spiritual Babylon. But when the ransomed of the Lord "return and come to Zion," "songs and everlasting joy" break forth again.

The Revelator describes this glorious result after the period of the apostasy in these words: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with

fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, *having the harps of God.* And they *sing the song of Moses* [a song of deliverance] the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb [a song of redemption]" (Rev. 15:2, 3). Those who have returned from Babylon have heavenly harps and can sing the songs of Zion. Praise God!

"From Babel confusion most gladly I fled,
And came to the heights of fair Zion instead;
I'm feasting this moment on heavenly bread;
I'll never go back, I'll never go back.

"The beast and his image, his mark, and his name,
My love or allegiance no longer can claim,
Though men may exalt them to honor and fame;
I'll never go back again."

The prophecies already cited make clear a mighty religious movement before the end of time, a movement designed to triumph over the apostasy. Since the apostasy was twofold in its nature, comprehending a corruption of evangelical faith and the development of ecclesiasticism, it is evident that the Last Reformation must both restore primitive truth and eliminate ecclesiasticism, thus bringing back to the world the original conception of the church as embracing the whole divine family under the direct moral and spiritual dominion of Christ. It is also evident from the prophecies

that this is to be accomplished by literally forsaking the systems of man-rule just as ancient Israel was restored after the captivity by God's people leaving Babylon and coming home to Zion.

Zion represents the church in its primitive, unified condition under the government and law of Christ alone. Babylon represents a foreign rule and another law. The two systems are fundamentally different. This difference was true in the type and must therefore be true in the antitype. In the old days of Israel's glory foreigners visited Jerusalem, but their presence in the city of God did not make them Israelites. And at one time the people of God were carried into captivity in Babylon, but their presence in that foreign, heathen city *did not make them Babylonians.*

This distinction is also clear in the antitypical relation. We do not have to go to prophetic symbols to find in the New Testament clear predictions of the rise of a false Christianity in opposition to the true. They stand out in marked contrast in the prophecy. On the one side there is a false religious system described as a beast power reigning. On the other side is placed in contrast a company that have gotten the victory over the beast and over his image and over his mark, and they stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. The mother of harlots appears, but in contrast therewith is seen a pure woman, the bride of Christ. In contrast with Babylon we have Zion.

The sect system, wherein ecclesiasticism reigns and where the full truth in all its purity can not be taught and practised, does not represent the true church, but Babylon. The system is foreign. It contains, however, many *who are not Babylonians* but children of the divine family—Israelites indeed. The awful judgments of God pronounced against Babylon are directed against the false system itself and the real beast-worshipers it contains, not against the true people of God, who love their Lord and are willing to walk in the light of his Word as fast as they are able to understand it. When we consider that this sect system has been the means of deceiving millions—millions who will come up in that last day and plead their religious profession, only to hear the awful words, "Depart from me, I never knew you"—when we consider, I say, these evil results, we can not but repeat the words of the prophecy concerning the overthrow of Babylon, "True and righteous are His judgments." The commandment of God is, "*Come out of her,* MY PEOPLE, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and THAT YE RECEIVE NOT OF HER PLAGUES."

The movement to ignore sect lines and bring the true people of God into unity is not based upon a mere interpretation of prophecy, however. The necessity of such a work is being felt by the true people of God everywhere, even those who make no particular claims to knowledge of pro-

phetic interpretation. Knowledge that the ecclesiastical systems of the present day do not represent the real church outlined in the New Testament is all that is absolutely necessary in order to stir the heart for reformatory action. Departure from the truth of God carries with it responsibility on the part of all those who become awakened to that departure—*responsibility to return to the Bible standard.* A final reformation there must and would be even if it had never been predicted by the prophets of old; for Christ, the great ever-living head of the church, would at the proper time pour out upon his servants the spirit of judgment against all unscriptural systems and forms of worship and demand the restoration of the pure church of the morning time of our era.

The future prospect

The work of God in the latter days is to be more extensive, however, than simply calling God's people together from their scattered condition in sect Babylon. There are indications in the prophecy already cited that the "everlasting gospel" is to be carried to the ends of the earth. The movement is to be world-wide. In our consideration of parallel prophecies in Daniel, we saw that the kingdom is represented in two phases—first as a *stone,* under which symbol it broke down the kingdoms of heathen darkness; and then as a *mountain,* when it *is to fill the whole earth.* And again, after describing the 1,260-year reign of the papacy, Daniel said: "But the judg-

ment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under the whole heaven,* shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and *all dominions shall serve and obey* HIM'' (Dan. 7: 26, 27).

There is abundant evidence to be seen by the careful observer that there are now at work in the Christian world forces that are preparing for great changes. Christian charity is refusing to be confined by sectarian barriers. The Christian consciousness is becoming aroused to the evils of sectarianism and sectarian systems as it has never been aroused in any past age. There is a longing among spiritual people everywhere to escape from the blighting effect of a divided Christianity. Evangelism is becoming more and more detached from organized denominations, and the denominational lines are being ignored in a way that would have astonished the people of a century ago. Numerous attempts are being made to unite the various denominations on the mission fields and in the homeland. While many of these efforts are mere blind groping for a way out of the fogs of sectarianism, they show unmistakably that back of and underlying all these efforts is a mighty force slowly but surely gathering power that (so far as God's true people are concerned) shall in time rise to

break once for all the rigorous reign of human ecclesiasticism and reestablish in power and glory the simple, primitive theocracy, where Christ shall be exalted as the true and only ruler of his people.

Ecclesiasticism, however, dies hard. In fact, it is scarcely correct to say that it will die at all. The churches of men are largely made up of worldly-minded professors who know not the birth and life of the Spirit. To such the church will never appear as anything different from an institution organized and governed after the pattern of the kingdoms of this world. According to the prophecy, God's true saints will die to ecclesiasticism by forsaking the sect system, but the rule of human churchly power will go right on until the end of time. Furthermore, we may expect the contrast and the conflict between these two forces to become more pronounced as the years go by. While the Revelation represents the call of God's people out of Babylon as the movement that again brings into prominence the "bride," the true church (chap. 19:1-9), it also reveals the fact that there will be another great movement in opposition to the truth.

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to

gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (chap. 16:13, 14). The nature and purpose of this gathering is described in another place. "Satan . . . shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and *compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city*: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (chap. 20:7-9).

Let this be a solemn warning to all, that God's people may discern between the false and the true. The movement that brings together in one the real saints of the Lord is effected by the Spirit of God, while "unclean spirits" operating in the apostate powers of the ecclesiastical world will effect a totally different union. The distinction is clear in the prophecy and must therefore become true in fact.

The final reformation is on. "Final," I say, because it leaves nothing to be restored as regards either doctrine, practise, or spirit. It stands committed to the restoration of the whole truth and the harmonious unity of all true Christians in one Christ-ruled, Spirit-filled body. In short, it stands committed to the restoration of apostolic Christianity in its entirety—its doctrines, its ordinances, its personal regenerating and sanctifying experiences, its spiritual life, its holiness, its power, its

purity, its gifts of the Spirit, its unity of believers, and its fruits. This reformation will continue until it becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth, until "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."

Nor is this picture of events a mere dream of fanciful idealists; for it is already true in part, and the "more sure word of prophecy" to which we have appealed sustains our hope. The actual fulfilment of so many predicted events assures us that there shall not fail one word of all his good promises. Already multiplied thousands of the Lord's redeemed people have discerned God's plan of effecting unity and have completely ignored all the lines of sect and human ecclesiasticism, recognizing as the church nothing else than the entire brotherhood in Christ, and recognizing as ecclesiastical authority nothing else than that moral and spiritual dominion of Christ by which alone he governed his people in primitive times.

This reformation is the movement of God. It is not a humanly organized movement depending for its success on the ability of men to persuade people to leave other churches and join them. God himself is breaking down the barriers that divide, and in response to his call the redeemed are forsaking human sects and creeds, and their hearts are flowing together. The center of this movement

is not a particular geographical location, nor is its nucleus a particular set of fallible men: the center and nucleus of this world-wide movement is OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, and its operative force is the SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD, which draws the faithful together in bonds of holy love and fellowship. Multitudes already recognize no other bonds of union than that moral and spiritual affinity which is the common heritage of all the disciples of Jesus that know the blessed experience of the heavenly birth. Multitudes more are beginning to see the light of this glorious truth, and in due time Christ, the Light, will illuminate the hearts of all the saved ones. All hail the day that lies just ahead!

"Back to the one foundation, from sects and creeds made free,
Come saints of every nation to blessed unity.
Once more the ancient glory shines as in days of old,
And tells the wondrous story—one God, one faith, one fold."

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